



A STUDY IN
The 1st & 2nd. Epistles of Peter

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With my whole heart have I sought thee; O let me not wander from thy commandments. Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee. Ps. 119:10,11

The first word of this letter, *Peter*, identifies the author of the two letters that bear his name. He is the brother, and fellow Apostle of Andrew, son of Jonah (*Matt. 16:17, 1 Pet. 1:1*). He wrote this letter to a group of Christians scattered throughout the northern area of what was called *Asia Minor*. These believers were probably made up of both Jews and Gentiles, as the apostle addressed them as "*aliens*" (*1 Pet. 1:1*), a word indicating that Peter was not addressing Jews only, or Gentiles only, but to *Christians* who were living their lives in such a way, that they would have stood-out as "*aliens*" in the surrounding culture. In this letter, Peter spoke much about persecution (*to what degree it was, at the time of his writing, Peter doesn't say*), but whether ongoing or anticipated, the church would endure tremendous suffering from Caesar-Nero (*Rome*) that in time would bring the martyrdom of the apostle Peter, of which Jesus predicts (*Jn. 21:18-19*). 1st Peter 5:13 indicates the Peter sent this letter from a *local church*.

Though Peter spoke much of persecution(s) to be endured, there's not emphasis on—the suffering itself. Peter realized that believers (*the Church*) would have to fight (*at the same time*), the enemy out-side the church, and—the rise of "*false teachers*" with-in the church (*2 nd. Pet. 2:1-3*). These professed leaders in the churches, both then and now, bring about doubt and error with their fellowship (*acceptance*). First Peter, while addressing several issues, provides an explanation for, and encouragement when, in the "*fiery trials*" (*1 Pet. 4:12*). Those trials seem to hit us harder when those struggles come from somewhere or someone close to us, especially in our personal lives: a rift in a marriage, an unwed daughter's pregnancy, chaos between family members and such-like. These "*Trials*"—at first glance, may not seem applicable to the integrity (*strength to hold together*) of the church, but the source of such discord are too—well the same in the church at large. Believers can create "*trials*" in a number of ways, particularly in areas of relationships (*family, friends and enemies*) and theology (*who God is, who Jesus is, what His word says and how to rightly understand it for application*) (*2 Pet. 3:17-18*).

To guard against that kind of discord—both in our families and in our churches—God's people need to know who He is. *Our knowledge of God through His word is our first line of defense* against the conflicts that threaten to tear us apart. So a most important question is—what means are you continuing to take, to grow in your faith? My brothers and sisters in Christ, let's always take the time to guard our minds with the *proper knowledge of God* so that we may not drift from the path God has provided.

— ***Second Peter*** —

As the central theme of 1 Peter was *suffering*, so that of 2 Peter is *knowledge*. If the false teachers were magnifying their "*knowledge*" as the basis for their superiority, Peter was determined to show the only answer to erroneous knowledge is "*true knowledge*". The basis of this knowledge is to come from *those who know Christ and the revelation of the Scriptures* (that came through the direct impartation and control of the Holy Spirit). Perversive teaching in the church will always be accompanied by divisions (*in varying types & degrees, but divisions none-the-less*). Peter shares how God has historically judged such erroneous teaching (*leadership*) and describes their activities, false premises and their ultimate doom. (*Consider: 2 Pet. 2:21, Matt. 15:14, Matt. 23:27, Matt. 26:24*). There is a pre-ailing eschatological (*end times*) aspect of 2 Peter which is in the last chapter, and points out that

the only hope for the future lies in the true knowledge of God's sovereign plan for creation (*particularly as dealing with what sin has wrought in mankind*), and in patience while it is being carried out.

The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night!! (2 Pet. 3:10, 1Thes. 5:2)

— **Outline** —

1st Peter

- 1. Christ and the Trial of Faith (1:3-25)**
 - A. The Inheritance of Faith (1:3-12)
 - B. The Response of Faith (1:13-17)
 - C. The Birth of Faith (1:18-25)
- 2. Christ and the Life of Faith (2:1-25)**
 - A. The Relationship of Faith (2:1-10)
 - B. The Walk of Faith (2:11-19)
 - C. The Example of Faith (2:20-25)
- 3. Christ and the Obedience of Faith (3:1-22)**
 - A. The House of Faith (3:1-7)
 - B. The Activity of Faith (3:8-17)
 - C. The Patience of Faith (3:18-22)
- 4. Christ and the Ethics of Faith (4:1-19)**
 - A. The Reversals of Faith (4:1-6)
 - B. The Consummation of Faith (4:7-14)
 - C. The Posture of Faith (4:15-19)
- 5. Christ and the Church of Faith (5:1-9)**
 - A. The Pastor of Faith (5:1-4)
 - B. The Victory of Faith (5:5-9)

Conclusion

2nd Peter

- 1. The Nature of True Knowledge (1:2-21)**
 - A. A Gift from God (1:2-4)
 - B. A Growth in Experience (1:5-11)
 - C. A Ground of Certainty (1:12-21)
- 2. The Peril of False Teaching (2:1-22)**
 - A. The Acceptance of Error (2:1-3)
 - B. The Examples of Error (2:4-10a)
 - C. The Activities of Error (2:10b-19)
 - D. The Danger of Error (2:20-22)
- 3. The Hope in True Knowledge (3:1-18)**
 - A. The Precedent of the Past (3:1-7)
 - B. The Promise of the Future (3:8-13)
 - C. The Persistence of Expectation (3:14-18)

Conclusion