

## NOTES AND QUESTIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP STUDY IN THE SECOND LETTER OF PETER –

### CHAPTER THREE

When Peter wrote this second letter he obviously felt so passionate about his topic that he did not need anyone else to phrase it and write it down for him. The letter is short, strong and to the point. The first chapter is concerned with true knowledge, not in an academic sense, but of a person, Jesus Christ. When we learn something new of Jesus our response of faith starts a cycle moving which leads back to wanting to know more of Him and on to the development of real Christian love towards each other. The source of that knowledge is not just our memory of great past experiences but the God-given word of God which also needs to be God-taught.

The second chapter is about false knowledge and those who teach it. It deals with the motives of false teachers, greed and lust; with their methods, lies and deception; with the content of their teaching, a denial of Christ and His work on the cross; and with their eventual fate, condemnation and destruction. It emphasises that they invariably know the truth before they turn away from it and attempt to pervert it.

Peter draws on 4 Old Testament stories to make his point. He refers first(2:4) to the angels who followed Satan in rebellion, believing his lie that if they listened to him they could be godlike without God.(Isa.14) If angels who rebelled could not escape God's judgment how could false teachers expect to?

We are given a new insight into the story of Noah by the comment in 2:5 that he was a preacher of righteousness. He did not just spend his time building but preaching the gospel that there was salvation in his ark. The people of his day chose to believe the false teachers who said that all was well and the flood would not happen. They too faced destruction.

Peter also confirms,(2:6-8) what is not otherwise apparent in Gen.19 about Lot. He was a faithful witness in the face of the false teaching which said immorality was OK. And God did rescue him from the judgment which came upon the rest of the people of Sodom.(2:9)

Balaam was prepared like all false teachers to preach the message which was popular rather than true if the pay was good enough.(2:15,16) Donkeys have more sense than false teachers!

Peter uses a series of uncomplimentary illustrations from everyday life to describe false teachers. They are like wild animals,(2:12) dirty stains,(2:13) dogs drinking their vomit,(2:22) and sows wallowing in the mud after a bath!(2:22) Do we take the problem as seriously as he did?

Before looking at the last chapter review your titles for the sections of chapter two to see whether you can improve them.

Chapter three is about knowledge of the future, one of the commonest areas of false teaching. The obvious divisions seem to be verses 1-2; 3-7; 8-13; and 14-18.

#### Section 1 - verses 1-2

Q.1 What further confirmation is given here that Peter was the writer of both letters? What again does he say is his purpose in writing?(1:12) Why is this purpose so vital?(1:1-11)

Q.2 What does this section say about the relevant importance of the Old and New Testaments? (Eph.2:20) What is 'the commandment of the Lord and Saviour'? (Jn.13:34) Did He give any others?

#### Section 2 - verses 3-7

Q.3 When are the last days? When did they begin? (Acts 2:16,17) What kind of false teaching will come at that time? What will be the motive behind it? What approach to persuading people will they use? (II Tim.3:1-5)

Q.4 What two events will false teachers at the end link together? Why do they so logically go together? Why is denying both events so damaging to Christian growth?

Q.5 What important evidence will they have missed that shows the error of their teaching? How should we use this evidence to convince people of the truth of creation and the flood? How will the second major event be like the first and how will it be different?

#### Section 3 - verses 8-13

Q.6 What do you think is the meaning of verse 8? Does God not know the difference between the two? Does this provide grounds for saying that the days of Gen.1 are really thousands or millions of years?

Q.7 Why has God already waited nearly two thousand years since the time of Jesus? How does verse 9 help us to know that God does not just want a few select people to be saved? (I Tim.2:4) How should we be using the time?

Q.8 How will the present world end? How has this become a real possibility in the early 21st century? How should knowing this affect our daily lives? Why then is false teaching about this so damaging to our faith? How much warning of the end will we be given? (I Thess.5:2) What kinds of false teaching about the end have you encountered? How can you recognise them to be false?

#### Section 4 - verses 14-18

Q.9 Which word does Peter use again from chapter one to describe our response to true teaching about the end? What effect will such an attitude have on our lives?

Q.10 How can the patience of the Lord be salvation? How does Peter sum up Paul's letters? Why didn't Peter find them easy to study? How have they been misused by false teachers? With what effect upon themselves?

Q.11 What two instructions does Peter close with, one negative and one positive? What effect will false teaching have on Christians who believe it? How does Peter take us back once more to chapter one to sum up the effect dealing with false teaching will have? When we grow in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ who should have the credit?