

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

CHAPTER TWO

When Peter wrote his first letter his great concern was to build up young Christians in the word so that their lives at work, at home and before society would show a fervent love even in the face of the persecution he knew was coming.

The second letter focuses on one aspect of this same concern, a true knowledge of Jesus Christ. In the first chapter he emphasises how this knowledge was the source of his readers' faith just as much as his own.(1:1-3) He explains step by step the process of life change which occurs as true knowledge has its effect. It is a cycle which begins with knowledge of Christ and then returns to more knowledge but each time starting a chain reaction which leads to a greater demonstration of the love of God.(1:4-7) This will be the only source of real spiritual fruit and therefore we should choose accordingly.(1:8-11) Peter is quite prepared to go over the same ground again and again in the short time he realises is remaining to him on earth.(1:12-14) He remembers how important it was to him in future years to be able to look back on his own experience on the Mount of Transfiguration when he saw Jesus in glory.(1:15-18) But he is delighted that they have something even better, the word which God inspired to be written down and of which God alone can teach us the meaning.(1:19-21)

Can I encourage you to review your titles for the divisions of the first chapter before you move on to chapter two? More detailed study will have given you a deeper insight which may show you ways you could improve them.

Chapter two is about another kind of knowledge. My suggested divisions are verses 1-3; 4-8; 9-14; 15-16; 17-19; 20-22. Peter obviously felt so strongly about what he had to say in this chapter that it seems that he hardly took breath from verse 1 to verse 22, nevertheless breaking it up helps us to grasp the step by step logic of Peter's Old Testament illustrations.

Section 1 – (2:1-3)

Q.1 There was a greater threat facing the church than even Nero's lions; what was it? What does verse 1 tell us about their methods, message and fate? Is everyone who differs from us a false teacher?

Q.2 What does verse 2 add to our understanding of their way of operating and the consequence for the church of their activity? Can you give modern examples of just how this happens?

Q.3 Verse 3 expands further on the motivation, techniques and future of false prophets? Sum up these three verses into a profile of such a person.

Section 2 – (2:4-8)

Q.4 What four Old Testament examples does Peter use to illustrate his warning about false teachers? Whose false teaching did some angels believe?(Jude 6; Rev.20:1-3) What does this tell us about the real source of all false teaching? Where does false teaching send people?

Q.5 What does verse 5 add to the story of Noah in Gen.6? What would his message as a preacher have been? What false message would the people of those days have believed instead? What was their fate?(I Pet.3:19,20)

Q.6 What does verse 7 add to the story of Lot in Gen.19? What would his message have been? What would the false teachers of his day have been teaching? What was their fate?

Section 3 – (2:9-14)

Q.7 Looking back over the examples of the last few verses, how does the Lord rescue the godly? How did He do it then? How does He do it now?

Q.8 What will be the fate of the unrighteous? If there are levels of unrighteousness, what is the worst? Why is that?

Q.9 To what are false teachers compared? How are these pictures appropriate? What are the attitudes of these people to God, themselves and others? What exactly do they do which marks them out?

Section 4 – (2:15-16)

Q.10 To whom are false prophets now compared?(Num.22) What particular aspects of his life are highlighted? How do they relate to false teachers today? What warning is there here about ministry and money?

Section 5 – (2:17-19)

Q.11 What further everyday illustrations are used to describe false prophets and their fate? How are they helpful in bringing home to us the real nature of wrong teaching?

Q.12 What is the heart attitude of a false teacher? What is distinctive about his words and his life-style? Who are his special victims?

Section 6 – (2:20-22)

Q.13 In this section Peter points out that false teachers usually have a common history. What is it? Why does this make them so dangerous and so responsible for their actions?

Q.14 How does their eventual condition relate to their condition before they ever heard the gospel? Were they necessarily ever truly Christians?

Q.15 What two final pictures are used to portray false teachers? Show how well they fit. Sum up all you have learned from this chapter about the past history, heart attitude, motives, behaviour, techniques and fate of false teachers? Is Peter too hard on them?