

## *Second Baptist Church of Doylestown*

### *Overview Book of 2 Peter*

*6/26/17*

WARNINGS have many forms: lights, signs, sights, sounds, smells, feelings, and written words. With varied focus, their purpose is the same—to advise alertness and give notice of imminent danger. Responses to these warnings will also vary—from disregard and neglect to evasive or corrective action. How a person reacts to a warning is usually determined by the situation and the source. One reacts differently to an impending storm than to an onrushing automobile, and the counsel of a trusted friend is heeded more than advice from a stranger or the fearful imaginings of a child.

Second Peter is a letter of warning—from an authority none other than the courageous, experienced, and faithful apostle. And it is the last communication from this great warrior of Christ. Soon thereafter he would die, martyred for his faith.

Previously Peter had written to comfort and encourage believers in the midst of suffering and persecution—an external onslaught. But three years later, in this letter containing his last words, he wrote to warn them of an internal attack—complacency and heresy. He spoke of holding fast to the nonnegotiable facts of the faith, of growing and maturing in the faith, and of rejecting all who would distort the truth. To follow this advice would ensure Christ-honoring individuals and Christ-centered churches.

After a brief greeting (1:1), Peter gives the antidote for stagnancy and shortsightedness in the Christian life (1:2-11). Then he explains that his days are numbered (1:12-15) and that the believers should listen to his messages and the words of Scripture (1:16-21). Next, Peter gives a blunt warning about false teachers (2:1-22). They will become prevalent in the last days (2:1-2); they will do or say anything for money (2:3); they will spurn the things of God (2:2, 10-11); they will do whatever they feel like doing (2:12-17); they will be proud and boastful (2:18-19); they will be judged and punished by God (2:3-10, 20-22).

Peter concludes his brief letter by explaining why he has written it (3:1-18): to remind them of the words of the prophets and apostles that predicted the coming of false teachers, to give the reasons for the delay in Christ's return (3:1-13), and to encourage them to beware of heresies and to grow in their faith (3:14-18).

Addressed to those who "have received a faith as precious as ours," 2 Peter could have been written to us. Our world is filled with false prophets and teachers, who

claim to have the truth and who clamor for attention and allegiance. Listen carefully to Peter's message and heed his warning. Determine to grow in your knowledge of Christ and to reject all those who preach anything inconsistent with God's Word.

## **VITAL STATISTICS**

**PURPOSE:** To warn Christians about false teachers and to exhort them to grow in their faith in and knowledge of Christ

**AUTHOR:** Peter

**ORIGINAL AUDIENCE:** The church at large

**DATE WRITTEN:** Approximately A.D. 67, three years after 1 Peter was written, possibly from Rome

**SETTING:** Peter knew that his time on earth was limited (1:13-14), so he wrote about what was on his heart, warning believers of what would happen when he was gone—especially about the presence of false teachers. He reminded his readers of the unchanging truth of the gospel.

**KEY VERSE:** "His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness" (1:3).

**KEY PEOPLE:** Peter, Paul

**SPECIAL FEATURES:** The date and destination are uncertain, and the authorship has been disputed. Because of this, 2 Peter was the last book admitted to the canon of the New Testament Scripture. Also, there are similarities between 2 Peter and Jude.

## **THE BLUEPRINT**

1. Guidance for growing Christians (1:1-21)
2. Danger to growing Christians (2:1-22)
3. Hope for growing Christians (3:1-18)

While Peter wrote his first letter to teach about handling persecution (trials from without), he wrote this letter to teach about handling heresy (trials from within). False teachers are often subtly deceitful. Believers today must still be vigilant against falling into false doctrine, heresy, and cult activity. This letter gives us clues to help detect false teaching.

## **MEGATHEMES**

### **Diligence**

**EXPLANATION:** If our faith is real, it will be evident in our godly behavior. If people are diligent in Christian growth, they won't backslide or be deceived by false teachers.

**IMPORTANCE:** Growth is essential. It begins with faith and culminates in love for others. To keep growing we need to know God, keep on following him, and remember what he taught us. We must remain diligent in faithful obedience and Christian growth.

### **False Teachers**

**EXPLANATION:** Peter warns the church to beware of false teachers. These teachers were proud of their position, promoted sexual sin, and advised against keeping the Ten Commandments. Peter countered them by pointing to the Spirit-inspired Scriptures as our authority.

**IMPORTANCE:** Christians need discernment to be able to resist false teachers. God can rescue us from their lies if we stay true to his Word, the Bible, and reject those who distort the truth.

### **Christ's Return**

**EXPLANATION:** One day Christ will create a new heaven and earth, where we will live forever. As Christians, our hope is in this promise. But with Christ's return comes his judgment on all who refuse to believe.

**IMPORTANCE:** The cure for complacency, lawlessness, and heresy is found in the confident assurance that Christ will return. God is still giving unbelievers time to repent. To be ready, Christians must keep on trusting and resist the pressure to give up waiting for Christ's return.