

EXPOSITION OF 2 PETER

"Grow in Grace"

2 Peter 3:17, 18

Overview

1. Chapter 1 of this epistle focuses on "What a great salvation to remember" (cf. vv. 12-14). The second chapter states "What a great apostasy we are to avoid" (cf. vv. 20-21). The final chapter affirms "What a great hope we have" (cf. v. 13).
2. The immediate context for this study includes four imperatival verb forms: be diligent (v. 14), take account (v. 15), beware (v. 17), and grow (v. 18). In view of eternity, these are enormous commands for the child of God.
3. The first creation was destroyed by a universal flood (v. 6). The deliberate apostasy of this present world will be judged by fire (v. 7). Specifically, heaven, earth, components, and works will be destroyed. As a consequence, a new heavens and a new earth will be effected (v. 13). This is the great eternal hope of the believer. Then and only then will righteousness "dwell" (i.e. take up home).
4. As the believer acknowledges these catastrophic events, past, present, future, he is commanded by the Spirit by the afore mentioned imperatives. Two have been studied Be diligent (v. 14) and Take account (v. 15). Give your attention to the remaining imperatival verbs:-

1. BEWARE v. 17

A summary position has been reached, as the "wherefore" denotes. The emphatic personal pronoun "ye" is linked with "beloved" cf. how this affectionate term is applied to Epaphras (Col. 1:7); Onesimus (Col. 4:9; Philemon 16); Tychicus (Col. 4:7; Eph. 6:21); and four in Romans 16 (vv. 5, 8, 9, 12). The God Who commands does so towards His beloved!! Love provokes the expression of God's mind (will) to our wills!

Now the verb "beware" is better rendered "to be on guard." It is a call to full alert, as in the military. It is used 30 times + - in the N.T. (cf. Mt. 19:20; John 17:12; 2 Tim. 1:12; Jude 24). Being a present middle imperative, the verb act is to be continuous, with personal involvement, and taken as a command. It relates to three issues in purpose:

a. Influence

The aorist passive participle verb is only used here and Gal. 2:13 in the N.T. It means to be "carried together with." One must guard against this action! Watch influences!

b. Error

This is the agent which could "carry away together with." Moreover, this is the error of the "lawless" or "wicked." Guard must be up against such a revolt and disregard for Truth.

c. Fall

Instability is the opposite of steadfastness (cf. 2:14; 3:16) and is so stated. To be influenced by error (instrumental) opens the possibility of falling out of one's own steadfastness. God help us to be on guard. Deviation from the Truth of God is always a danger! May we be those who can be counted on!

2. GROW v. 18

Every believer is enjoined about:

a. A polarity

This is indicated by the particle "but." In contrast with the error of the wicked and falling out (v. 17), the believer is at the opposite side of the spectrum. He is overtly different! He is not stuck in one position nor does he fall out of His own steadfastness. There is an adversative "but" in his life!

b. A process

The contrast with error is truth. Hence, rather than "being carried away together with" (v. 17) and "falling out" (v. 17), there smack dab in the Bible is the present active imperative "grow" i.e. keep on growing. This pre-supposes:

1) Life There must have been a new beginning, a new birth (2 Cor. 5:17).

2) Development Whatever grows, animal, plant, believer--indicates there is something vital and essential. It is not mechanical but organic. Life grows!

3) Gradual Imperceptibly, one is a babe, boy/girl, youth, man/woman. The single act by which you are saved is followed by growth i.e. a marvelous process of forwardness in one's being (cf. 1 Cor. 3:1). Addition is not growth; growth is something inherent to the person! Takes place gradually.

c. A pattern

1) Grace Believers are in the realm of grace (Rom. 6:15). To grow in grace means to experience more and more the favor of God. It is having an increasing consciousness of His favor and kindness. We are saved by grace, live by grace, grow in grace.

2) Knowledge This means to grow in understanding of the whole scheme, plan, and purpose of one's salvation. Christian doctrine is hereby urged as a part of Christian's growth (Phil. 3:10).

d. A person

1) He is "ours." Thank God for a personal Saviour.

2) He is "Lord." He is totally the Sovereign.

3) He is "Saviour." He has completed a satisfaction for our sin toward the Father. This marvelous thought is included in the Name "Jesus."

4) He is "Christ." He is the "Anointed One" (so Greek for "Christ").

Therefore, growth is related to His lovely and adorable PERSON.

e. A purpose

The modern humanistic world is largely subjective, self-centered, and introspective. The Bible is Christo-centric. Hence, the purpose of growth is to provide a means whereby the Lord Jesus Christ is praised as God Almighty. If there is no growth in a believer's life, the Lord is robbed of His glory. God grant us a healthy-mindedness about the Saviour's glory.

Postview

Christianity is Christ. Once you believe on Him in truth, you are saved for eternity. The future is to be with the Lord. In the meantime, be diligent in your personal life, take account of God's long-suffering to save souls, beware of apostasy and all error, and grow continually in God's grace and in the knowledge of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord. "Amen" means "so let it be." So it is with this study. AMEN!