

## "Two Words"

Welcome to Remnant. We are in our third week of this series. In week one we talked about the Spiritual background facing the church in the latter half of the First Century. Jesus had ascended to heaven and the Apostles...the eyewitnesses.....the voices of authority were dying away.....as a result false teaching began to grow in the church like a cancer. PHOTO 1 Keep up

The false teaching would eventually be known as gnosticism. It was based on two primary truths with some other variants.

First, Jesus was never human, never really died on the cross, really never resurrected and is not coming back. He was a spiritual being who was pure and holy and could never have stooped so low as to become a filthy human...even for a minute.

Second, it wasn't necessary that Jesus did any of those things because salvation was never based on sin, repentance, forgiveness or grace. Salvation is based on those select few who have higher special knowledge.

So Peter, Jude, John and others began to warn the church. These false teachers were incredibly gaining traction among supposed followers of Jesus.

So some of the Apostles who were still alive in the latter half of the first century wrote letters warning those they would leave behind.

We spoke of the importance of this issues because gnosticism has grown now for over 2000 years and is still the greatest threat to the truth of the Good News of Jesus.

If you look for it, you will find gnosticism in every cult, every false religion and every belief system other than true Christianity. . PHOTO 1 Take down

So in Week 1 we spoke of Sticking to the Path that Jesus shared with us and the letters from Peter, Jude and John were letters from our Divine Mentors directed to us today.

Peter wrote in about 67AD and warned of false teachers coming to the church. Jude wrote a few years later and said...they are here...and John wrote his three letters in about 90AD some thirty years later and said...they are taking hold, growing and destructive to the church of Jesus PHOTO 2

Last week, we learned that the letters from the Apostles are guided by the Holy Spirit...each word ordained by God...each book of the Bible organized by God...each writer of each book of the Bible perfectly prepared by and selected by God to write that particular book...

We discussed how letters of the New Testament are more like portraits than pictures. Each one highlighting what the author wanted us to see.

Then we learned about the writer of the First book we will study...We learned about Simon son of Jonah, Simon, Peter..the rock.

We learned how he was uniquely prepared by God through the circumstances of his life to be the best person to write this most critical letter to the church.

He had something that brought his words power...He had one on one, hands on, side by side, experience living with and learning from Jesus.

Peter had a clear understanding of stepping out in faith, following Jesus, witnessing everything, and then receiving the forgiveness from Christ that he knew he didn't deserve.

So today we get to Peter's letter. But first, just a bit more background. Remember the year is 65 AD or so. Jesus has ascended a little over 30 years ago.

Peter is about 65 years old or so. He is in prison in Rome. He knows God has told him that his time is up. People he doesn't know will stretch out his arms in suffering as he dies. He is soon to be crucified and he tells us in his letter that he knows that.

Nero is the emperor of Rome and the city has recently burned. Nero blamed it on the Christians and used their death for entertainment in the Colosseum and for lighting the streets at night with their burning bodies.

While this is going on John the Apostle is relocating to Ephesus from Judea and will serve as the leader of the church as Ephesus for 30 years. He will eventually be the last...disciple...living.

Ok so we remember now who is writing this book....Let's talk for a moment about the purpose of this book.

Peter's second letter is written to provide direction to all who come after the apostolic age. The apostles knew that after their death the gospel message they preached would be challenged by many and discarded by some. In essence, they were aware that the church would need answers on great gospel questions, especially those relating to final judgment, Christ's future coming, and life in light of these realities.

And these answers must conform to real knowledge. Put simply, as the apostolic age drew to a close, the future of the Christian faith could not rest merely on the strength of stories told about those who walked and talked with Jesus Christ.

In these and numerous other contrasts, Peter describes the differences between a true knowledge of God and the ideas being offered up by false teachers.

From the moment Jesus ascended to heaven...There has been a desperate need in the world today for direction, for clear truth according to real knowledge. After all, the church today is wrestling with significant questions, and Christians need answers that enable them to know God in accordance with truth. The stakes are too high for guesses, theories, or human solutions. We will see in Second Peter three critical questions addressed and answered.

**First, can someone come to know God without knowledge of Jesus as God's Son?** In our twenty-first-century context there is an overabundance of religious choices. And choice after choice dilutes, softens, or outright abandons the absolute necessity of belief in Jesus.

For many, knowledge of God is something available from doing good works or being socially active or participating in any number of religious ceremonies or belief systems; Jesus is secondary. To put the question bluntly: can someone come to know God without Jesus Christ being at the center? Second Peter provides the answer.

A true knowledge of God includes knowledge of Jesus Christ as God's Son. The second person of the trinity. He was fully God...the same as the Father and the Holy Spirit. Jesus is God's Son and as such is not only our Savior but our King. For the apostles, Jesus has been given the nations as his inheritance. As God's Son, Jesus sits enthroned above all the world's rulers and religious ways. Peter concludes unabashedly that a true knowledge of God must include a belief in Jesus as his Son.

**Second, can one know God and yet abandon the rigorous life that the apostles required of those who profess Christ?** The false prophets of Peter's day were quick to suggest that alternative viewpoints were permissible. Many were willing to advocate sexual and material freedoms that ran contrary to the apostles' message.

They tried to infiltrate the church of Jesus with sexual perversions: incest, fornication, homosexuality, sexual permissiveness. They separated their actions from their words. Promoting lying, deception, greed, manipulation, in anything goes because we have special knowledge and are already saved.

Amazingly, the great gospel issues of our day remain the same: can one truly know God and yet separate himself or herself from the historic, orthodox understanding of sexual ethics? Can one possess knowledge of God and yet pursue a life of personal gain?

Second Peter confronts those who would teach that sensuality and greed are acceptable parts of a Christian lifestyle. In verses 1, 2 of chapter 2 he equates the sexual ethics of these false teachers with that of blaspheming the truth and "denying the Master who bought them."

**Third, can you know God and reject the notion that Jesus will return?** Put differently, and more precisely, can you possess a knowledge of God that leaves out that bit at the end of the Apostle's Creed about him coming back "to judge the living and the dead"?

Peter's letter confronts those who deny that Jesus Christ will return as Judge. In 3:4 he begs the question. The remainder of the chapter is dedicated to showing not just how logical such a belief in judgment is, but how important it is as well. First, it was prophesied as truth (3:2). Further, the idea of God coming in judgment has historical precedent (3:5–7). In addition, the letter will go on to provide reasons for his delay (3:8–10) and put forward motivations to live lives of holiness and watchful care until he comes again (3:11–15).

So Peter takes on the lies that faced his people in the First Century and all of God's people throughout all centuries to come.

The aim of this book

We are bombarded with churches, television shows, radio programs and almost all social media by people who use Jesus' name in vain. They claim to know Jesus, they seem educated, they seem to have authority, many have degrees in religion from some of the most pagan places in America (The Seminaries at Harvard, Yale, and other "prestigious" places of ...don't miss the irony....HIGHER LEARNING.

In an insecure world where contradictory views on the gospel and its demands persist, we need reliable footing, a sure foundation to keep us from stumbling. Peter's aim in writing this second letter is simply to provide that foundation, to establish the feet of the church on higher, solid ground. The letter has at least three distinct aims.

**First, this letter is written to establish, strengthen, and stabilize Christians in the true knowledge of God.** The words establish, strengthen, and stabilize are intentionally chosen. Not only does each of these words appear in the text of 2 Peter in some form, but they all originate from the same word in Greek. The identical word appears in 1:12 as "established," in 3:17 as "stability," and in 2:14 and 3:16 as "unsteady" and "unstable" respectively. Peter's letter is written so that we will not lose our own stability but will find strength and sure footing in the truth of God.

Second, the letter intends to rebuke, warn, and correct those among us who teach and revel in any other knowledge of God. This aim is especially directed at Bible teachers. Chapter 2 includes some of the strongest language in the entire Bible. And it is directed against pastors and teachers who advocate a different gospel, live a different life, and claim a special knowledge. Peter says, just look at their lives and you know they have never met Jesus. As a pastor and teacher, it is impossible to preach from this letter without seriously thinking about your own life and practice. Finally, this letter aims to rescue and reclaim the faithful who have tripped and fallen along the way. Put simply, it not only proves to the stumbling church throughout all ages what it means to know God—it intends to pick us up and put us back on the way. In summary, this letter provides us with the works that grow faith, the words that are worthy of following, the warnings that keep us from losing our way, the reminders that hold us fast, and the reasons to be engaged in productive work while we await Christ's return.

So what are you waiting for? Second Peter chapter 1 verse 1

## 2 Peter 1:1 (ESV) 1 Simeon Peter,

Read 5 Times.

Simeon Peter...odd. People would have noticed this. Remember Peter is a Rock Star. Famous throughout all of Galilee. He at this point had been the leader of the Church in Jerusalem for 30 years. Prior to that he was the leader of the 12 and one of Jesus' inner circle of three.

Peter was in the mononymous category...people known by one name. His name was given to him by Jesus Himself. Peter...the Rock. One name is all it took.

Some have reached that status today...Sting...Bono...Adele..Madonna.....Mr T....Elvis...Elton...but prior to reaching that level of celebrity they had other names.

Reginald Dwight became Elton. Gordon Sumner became Sting. Lawrence Tureaud became Mr T....I couldn't imagine getting a letter from the Rock that said at the top...from the desk of Dwayne the Rock. He knows he is famous. He just introduces himself....Hey I am the Rock. Today's literal Rock Star.

Yet Peter....begins this letter with two names....Simeon Peter. Odd but not accidental. Peter begins this letter from prison on death row...reminding himself and us of who he was...and now who he is in Christ.

He is essentially saying...I am Simeon...the fisherman...the Son of Jonah....the synagogue drop out...the one who lived life on impulse...unstable at times...my mouth ahead of my brain....Yes this letter is written to you from Simeon.

Simeon in Hebrew means "the one who listens"

Simeon was a son of Jacob and is one of the 12 Tribes of Israel.

Genesis 29:33 (ESV) 33 She conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Because the Lord has heard that I am hated, he has given me this son also." And she called his name Simeon.

So with just one word of this letter....Peter tells us the most important thing we need to remember about him. He used to be Simeon.

And with the Second word of this letter. Peter tells us the entire story of his life.

Simeon...Peter. Who I was...and now who Jesus says I am.

As I sit on death row...I still can't believe it. I am just Simeon...the fisherman...the Son of Jonah...and then I met Jesus and he saw in me something I could never see in myself. The very first words to me.

John 1:41–42 (ESV) 41 He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which means Christ). 42 He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon the son of John. You shall be called Cephas" (which means Peter).

Yes I was Simeon...I listened...and I found the Messiah...and Jesus said...Yes you are Simon the son of John....but then Jesus spoke the potential of my future...you SHALL BE CALLED Peter.

Notice the exact words...you shall be called. Jesus says not only do I think you are the Rock...other people will affirm in you what I see. You will be called the Rock. You Peter are the only true Rock. Others can give themselves a name...but Simeon...this is the name given to you by God.

So Peter knows...he can't use the name Peter without thinking about Simeon. Humility is recognizing your true nature and knowing that anything good in you comes from God.

Galatians 6:3 (ESV) 3 For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

Philippians 2:3 (ESV) 3 Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.

Simeon Peter.....that is all you need to know about me...Simeon is who I was....Peter is who I am in Christ.

The order here is important too....any time you see a list in Scripture...the first term is always the most important. Peter is saying here....Yes you know me as Peter the Rock of the Church...but please don't ever use that term without first realize that I am Simeon...the one who could accomplish nothing without Jesus. Peter is just echoing in 2 words what Jesus said.

John 15:5 (ESV) 5 I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

All I have done and seen is because of Jesus. He named me the Rock. He guided, gifted, and worked through me. When Jesus took over...others saw in me...Him...He is the true Rock...People call me the rock because they see Him in me.

When Jesus first met me He said in the future they would call me the Rock...then I denied Him..at his deepest moment...I failed. Some rock right? He should have named me Chalk. Yet one morning at breakfast....Jesus said something incredible...something I never thought was possible....something I didn't deserve...I couldn't believe what my ears were hearing....Odd for Simeon the one who hears right? Jesus looked me straight in the eyes.

Matthew 16:18 (ESV) 18 And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Can you imagine Peter as he heard Jesus' words? Peter one day..they will call you the Rock....but Today Peter...this day...even though you betrayed me...even though you denied me...even though you took God's name in vain and cursed about it....Listen up Simeon....I TELL YOU.....**YOU ARE PETER**...You have become the Rock.

Why? Because the transformation of who we were and who we will be in Christ is based on forgiveness Peter...not knowledge.

You Peter experienced forgiveness....You experienced my grace...my mercy...my love...and you Simeon have been forgiven...You ARE PETER.

And By the Way Peter....it is this forgiveness...this transformation...that builds my church.  
And the gates of Hell can't prevail against my church...  
Peter...people are going to remember that you were Simon...but once they see me work through you...they will know that you are a Rock....because Peter...they aren't seeing you...they are seeing me.  
And I have always been...don't miss this...The Rock of Your Salvation and the Rock of all the ages  
The Prophets foretold of a cornerstone

Isaiah 28:16 (NIV84) 16 So this is what the Sovereign Lord says: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation; the one who trusts will never be dismayed.

Since ancient times, builders have used cornerstones in their construction projects.

**IMAGE 2** A cornerstone was the principal stone, usually placed at the corner of an edifice, to guide the workers in their course. The cornerstone was usually one of the largest, the most solid, and the most carefully constructed of any in the edifice.

Once the cornerstone was set, it became the basis for determining every measurement in the remaining construction; everything was aligned to it. As the cornerstone of the building of the church, Jesus is our standard of measure and alignment.

If the cornerstone was off the entire structure would eventually collapse. It is the standard that determines every plumb line...every other rock is placed in relationship with the cornerstone

Isaiah 8:13–15 (ESV) 13 But the Lord of hosts, him you shall honor as holy. Let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. 14 And he will become a sanctuary and a stone of offense and a rock of stumbling to both houses of Israel, a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. 15 And many shall stumble on it. They shall fall and be broken; they shall be snared and taken."

### **. IMAGE 3**

God tells us through the prophet Isaiah...I am sending a tested rock...a precious cornerstone...for a sure foundation. For some a rock of protection...a sanctuary...but for others and to the Jews...a rock they will stumble upon.

Paul speaking about those who lived In the Time of Moses in the desert...

1 Corinthians 10:4 (ESV) 4 and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ.

Then note the irony as Peter the new leader of the early church after healing a lame man... preaches to those who killed Jesus.

Acts 4:8–13 (ESV) 8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders, 9 if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, 10 let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well.

11 This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. 12 And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

Peter is telling them....they call me Peter...but the rock they are really seeing is the one you killed. Jesus is the rock...the cornerstone...rejected by you..the supposed builders. And to any Gnostics listening...there is no other salvation based on any other foundation. There is salvation in NO ONE ELSE.

Later in his first book, cleverly called First Peter...Peter the rock tells us about the real Stone of Salvation.

1 Peter 2:4–12 (ESV) 4 As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, 5 you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6 For it stands in Scripture: "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame." 7 So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone," 8 and "A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense."

They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do. 9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people;

As the cornerstone of the building of the church, Jesus is our standard of measure and alignment. Don't miss this....it was the relationship of each stone with the cornerstone that established the structure...its stability, its shape, and it's longevity. Peter is telling us...Jesus is the true Rock...the cornerstone of everything...the foundation of truth that we all align with. Yes He called me the Rock but He said He would build His church in the same way. **PHOTO 4**

You...each of us...Peter says....are like LIVING STONES...being arranged in a Spiritual house...to be a holy priesthood. Peter is saying, "He guys...with Jesus...we all rock.....now let's roll"

Jesus is either your cornerstone and the Rock of your Salvation...or He is the stumbling stone that you reject, trip over, and get destroyed.

But either way...one thing is clear...the rock doesn't move. Jesus can be the Rock of your Salvation or He can be the Rock of your Destruction. The choice is yours.

Two Words...Two words that tell a life story...Two words that capture the essence of the Gospel. Two words that reveal the power of the transformation of Christ. Simeon Peter two words that explain what others see.

13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus.

Then notice the incredible validation of what Peter has been trying to tell us about himself.

Uneducated...common men....yep Simeon.

Been with Jesus...yep...Peter....

That is how the letter begins...Simeon Peter...and after just two words...we too must stop because just like them....we too are stunned. Simeon....had been with Jesus.....He is Simeon Peter....and in the next few pages...he will speak to us..with boldness and we too will stand astonished...because He like almost no one else..had been with Jesus. Let's Pray