

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

SPREADING THE SOUL-SAVING MESSAGE OF JESUS

2 PETER LESSON 4 (Overview of 1 and 2 Peter)

Introduction by narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST. Spreading the soul-saving message of Jesus. And now, Timothy Sparks and Ben Bailey.

Ben Bailey:

“If anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter” (1 Pet. 4:16). I’m Ben Bailey.

Timothy Sparks:

And I’m Timothy Sparks. Welcome to our overview of the Books of 1 and 2 Peter. These lessons are being brought to you by loving, caring members of the churches of Christ. The church of Christ in your area would like you to stop by and visit with them. They would be happy to study the Bible with you. If you do not know much about the church of Christ, they would be happy to explain to you the concept of the New Testament church, why we believe what we believe, and why we do what we do according to the Word of God. We, too, would like to help you in your study of the Bible. We are making this broadcast available on CD or DVD. If you would like to order copies of today’s lesson, or any of our other lessons, you can visit us on our website at www.thegospelofchrist.com, fill out the request form that you will find there, and we will be happy to send you whatever you need.

In this overview of the Books of 1 and 2 Peter, we are going to summarize all five chapters of 1 Peter, and all three chapters of 2 Peter.

Ben Bailey:

In 1 Peter 1:10-12 (and again in verses 18-19), we find “the great salvation.” In 1 Peter 1:10, Peter writes, “Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you.” You and I today are a part of this salvation. The question is asked in Hebrews 2:3, “How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?” You and I have been given the gift of Jesus Christ as the sacrifice for our sins. John 3:16 says, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” The “great salvation” of which we are a part is the gift of God’s Son for us. Our salvation is great because it is made available to us by a just and fair God Who is Himself great. Our salvation is great because of the price Christ paid for it. Our salvation is great because of the blessings we receive through it. Our salvation is great because, although we may have to endure sufferings, trials, and tribulations in this life, we have been promised a life in Heaven with God where righteousness dwells. As Christians, we are a part of this great salvation. In 1 Peter 1:18-19, Peter says, “You were not redeemed with corruptible things, like

silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”

Timothy Sparks:

We must never forget what it cost God to make our salvation a reality. As Peter said in 1 Peter 1:17-18, we have been redeemed by the “precious blood of Christ.” Value is frequently determined by the price that is paid. And Peter here makes it clear that a terribly high price—the highest price possible—was paid for our salvation: the blood of Christ Himself! We should cherish this salvation, and be grateful and thankful to God for it.

In 1 Peter 2, we learn about “the great example.” Peter writes, “For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps” (vs. 21). Christ is our great example. Philippians 2:5-11 teaches us,

“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

From Philippians 2:5-11, we learn that Jesus is our great pattern. From 1 Peter 2:21, we learn that He is our great example.

Ben Bailey:

In 1 Peter 2, Peter examines suffering. Jesus was the perfect example of how to suffer in a godly way. Peter wrote of Christ, “Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth, Who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him Who judges righteously” (vss. 22-23). When we suffer, how can we deal with that suffering in a godly way? We can do it in the same way Christ did. We can walk in His footsteps as He walked the road of suffering. We see that he committed no sin. When people laughed at Christ, spit in His face, mocked Him, and made fun of Him, He did not return “in kind” those types of things. He had “no guile in His mouth.” That is to say, He did not say something evil in return. We live in a world today that says, “Do not get mad; get even!” That was not the idea that Christ had. Jesus simply committed Himself to God, and decided to let God handle the matter. Romans 12:19 speaks to this as well. Paul wrote, “Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord.” We may be the only Bible that some people ever “read.” Our lives, even if we lead lives of immense suffering, can provide a good example of what a Christian should be. Paul wrote, “You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men” (2 Cor, 3:2). By their lifestyles, such people could prove to be a living example of what a Christian should be. In Matthew 5:16, Jesus said, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”

In 1 Peter 3, we find a discussion about “the great answer.” Peter wrote, “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear” (1 Pet. 3:15). The idea is that we are always to be ready to give a reasoned, logical, well-thought-out answer when people ask us why we are Christians.

Timothy Sparks:

We are commanded to “sanctify the Lord God in your hearts.” The word “sanctify” means “to set apart.” The word for “defense” comes from the Greek, *apologia*. This is the word from which we get our English term “apologetics”—the field of study devoted to defending Christianity. Peter reminds us, of course, that we must offer a defense “in meekness.” This means that we provide an answer with a gentle spirit, and with respect for those to whom we are responding. We as Christians have a responsibility to give a satisfactory answer to those people who ask us why we believe what we believe. If someone asks us what we did to become a Christian, we should be prepared to tell them. We know what the Scriptures told us to do to become a Christian, so we should be able to tell others. We know that we do not “just accept Jesus into our heart.” We know that there is no such thing found in Scripture as “the sinner’s prayer.” Rather, we know that in order to become a Christian, a person must hear the Gospel, believe in Jesus as the Son of God, repent of past sins, confess Christ as Savior, and be baptized for the remission of sins. If people ask us why we worship as we do, we must be able to tell them. For example, if someone were to ask us why we worship without instruments of music, we need to be able to take them to such passages as Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16. We must show them that we are to speak to other another in “psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.” The text of 1 Peter 3:15 makes it clear that we must be ready to provide reasonable, scriptural answers to those who inquire of us regarding what we do and why we do it. We must be ready, willing, and able to stand on God’s Word.

Ben Bailey:

In 1 Peter 4, we see “the great name.” We read in 1 Peter 4:16, “Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.” The idea of people being call “Christians” appears more than once in the New Testament. It appears in Acts 11:26, where the text says, “And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.” They were not called proselytes. Nor were they called by a mere man’s name. They were simply called, after Christ, “Christians.” If someone were to refer to you, would they call you just a Christian, or would they refer to you by some denominational name? If you are anything but a Christian, then you are more than what God has told you to be. If you are anything less, then you are not what God wants you to be. In Acts 26:28, King Agrippa said to Paul, “Almost you persuade me to become a Christian.” Did you ever break apart the name “Christian”? Christ is the root of that name. The name refers to us being part of what Christ is—thus, the name “Christian.” Christians are followers of Christ, and people who want to do His will. If we are a Christian, then we must not be ashamed of being such.

Timothy Sparks:

Paul said, “I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ” (Rom. 1:16). Perhaps one of the reasons that more people aren’t out trying to convert the lost has to do with the fact that they are ignorant of the Scriptures themselves, and thus are ashamed of their lack of knowledge. We need to rid ourselves of “the fear factor,” so that we are not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. If we suffer as a Christian, we should not be ashamed. Rather, we should glorify God! If you were put on trial for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you? I’m afraid that in the case of many Christians, the “charge” against them would be dismissed—for lack of evidence of their Christianity! We need to live up to “the great name” of “Christian.”

In 1 Peter 5, we learn of “the great enemy.” The enemy of our souls is the devil. Peter said that he “walks about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Pet. 5:8). But we are to “resist him firmly in the faith” (1 Pet. 5:9). We are being hunted, but we can use our “shield of faith” to resist the devil.

From 1 Peter, we learn about five things: (1) the great salvation (1 Pet. 1); (2) the great example (1 Pet. 2); (3) the great answer (1 Pet. 3); (4) the great name (1 Pet. 4); and (5) the great enemy (1 Pet. 5).

Ben Bailey:

From the Book of 2 Peter (which is about spiritual growth), we learn three powerful points. In chapter 1, we learn about the “ingredients” of spiritual growth. In chapter 2, we learn about the “impediments” to spiritual growth. In chapter 3, we learn of some “incentives” to spiritual growth. One of the key elements of the Book of 2 Peter is found in 2 Peter 3:18 where Peter says, “Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” The idea is that we must “continue to grow.” Peter says in 1 Peter 1:5-7, “Add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.” We cannot “pick and choose” from Peter’s list. The “whole package” of traits is what composes the Christian’s character. An analogy would be baking a cake. If the cook adds the sugar and eggs, but leaves out the flour, will an edible cake be the end result? Of course not. The cook must add **all** the ingredients in order to obtain the proper result. The same type of thinking applies to Christian character. If we leave out some of the things that Peter included in his list of admirable traits, are we going to be the kind of Christians that we ought to be? Of course not. This is not to say that we must be perfect in every area. But it is saying that we ought to be doing our best, and that we are working to improve in each of these areas. In 2 Peter 1, we find the ingredients for spiritual growth.

Timothy Sparks:

If we are not growing, then we are digressing. We cannot afford to stagnate. We are either growing spiritually, or we are going backwards. We learn from 2 Kings 19:30 that we must send our roots downward in order to bear fruit upward. If our roots are deep within the Word of God, we will be able to bear much fruit and bring glory to God. We need to be more mature in our spiritual lives today than we were yesterday. We need to be more knowledgeable in the Scriptures next month than we are today. We need to be people who talk to others more often about their soul’s salvation. We need to be people who are more concerned about the lost, and who are busily engaged in communicating the Gospel to others. If we possess the traits listed in 2 Peter 1, we will not be barren, but fruitful. And in being fruitful, we can be people who glorify God. Peter says that if we do these things, we will “never stumble.” One of the comforts found within the Scriptures is that we do not **have** to fall from grace. Sadly, there are some in the religious world today who teach that a Christian **cannot** fall from grace. Yet numerous passages (like 1 Corinthians 10:12, Galatians 5:4, and others) teach that a Christian **can** fall from grace. But a Christian does not **have** to fall from grace. We do not **have** to sin. Jesus said, “Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect” (Mt. 5:48). God’s desire is that we **not** sin. But if we do sin as Christians, He has made provisions for us to be forgiven. John wrote, “My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He

Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world” (1 Jn. 1:1-2).

Ben Bailey:

In 2 Peter 2, we learn about “impediments to spiritual growth.” Peter’s point is that false teachers, and false living, can stop spiritual growth. We learn that false teachers have false attitudes. They are “in it” for what they can “get out of it.” They try to exploit people for greed. They are lustful. Their attitude is all wrong! They ignore the authority of the Scriptures, and teach whatever they want. Sadly, we learn in 2 Peter 2 about the end of false teachers. In 2 Peter 2:20-22, Peter writes,

“For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: ‘A dog returns to his own vomit,’ and, ‘a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire.’”

What is going to happen to false teachers who were once faithful Christians? The Bible says that those people are going to be lost. False teachers and false teaching are not things to be taken lightly, because they can act as impediments to the spiritual growth of Christians.

Timothy Sparks:

One of the saddest things about false teaching is the effect has on those who accept it. Peter says,

“For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: ‘A dog returns to his own vomit,’ and, ‘a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire.’”

This shows that Christians **can** lose their salvation.

In 2 Peter 3, we learn of an “incentive” to spiritual growth—the Second Coming of the Lord. Peter tells us in verse 10 of this chapter that the Lord will come “as a thief in the night.” We may not know precisely when the Lord will come, but we must stay ready. If we **are** ready when the Lord comes, it will be because we **stayed** ready. Peter said, “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9). God wants you to be saved this very day. If you are not a Christian, we ask you to consider what we have said. In order to become a Christian, you must believe in Jesus as the Son of God. You must repent of your sins, confess Jesus as your Savior, and be baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then, you can live for Jesus all the rest of your life.

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STUDY QUESTIONS FOR OVERVIEW OF 1 AND 2 PETER

1. What is the subject matter of 1 Peter 1?
2. What is the subject matter of 1 Peter 2?
3. What is the subject matter of 1 Peter 3?
4. What is the subject matter of 1 Peter 4?
5. What is the subject matter of 1 Peter 5?
6. What is the subject matter of 2 Peter 1?
7. What is the subject matter of 2 Peter 2?
8. What is the subject matter of 2 Peter 3?
9. There are numerous reasons why a Christian's salvation is "great," but one of those relates to the price that was paid for it. What was that price?
10. In 1 Peter 1:17-18, Peter said that we are redeemed by something. What is that "something"?
11. Explain what Peter meant when he said that Christ "was reviled, but did not revile in return" (1 Pet. 2:22-23).
12. What is the connection between Matthew 5:16 and Romans 12:19?
13. What does the Greek word *apologia* mean?
14. What is "apologetics"?
15. Where in Scripture do we find an example of "the sinner's prayer" that should be prayed to obtain salvation?
16. Where were the disciples first called "Christians"? Support your answer with Scripture.
17. List the ingredients for spiritual growth that Peter discussed in 2 Peter 1:5-7.
18. Explain the point of 1 Corinthians 10:12 and Galatians 5:4.
19. In 2 Peter 2, the apostle discussed two impediments to spiritual growth. What are those two impediments?
20. What does it mean for the Lord to be "longsuffering" (2 Pet. 3:9)?
21. According to 2 Peter 1, what is one of the comforts of being a Christian?