

PREPARED TO LIVE IN VICTORIA:

UNDERSTANDING THE SCRIPTURES AND GROWING IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS

Houses of Light Church • December 16-17, 2023 • Pastor Netz Gómez

2 Pet .3:15-16

“And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, ¹⁶ as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures.”

I. INTRODUCTION

A. ***“And count the patience of our Lord as salvation”*** Peter here reinforces the theological argument to respond to scoffers about the apparent delay in Jesus' return, encouraging believers to keep in mind that the reason is the patience of the Lord that will bring the salvation of more people. It is not an inexplicable delay that they use as a pretext to sin or be unbelievers.

B. ***“just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him”*** Peter recognizes that God gave Paul wisdom and that both have had the same revelation from the Holy Spirit. They are not competing, on the contrary they are complementing each other.

1 Tim. 2:3-4 “This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴ who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

Rom. 2:4 “Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God’s kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?”

C. When Peter calls Paul ***“our beloved brother”*** he continues in that tone of love that he has expressed throughout his letter. In this chapter alone Peter has used the word ***“beloved”*** three times (vs. 1, 8 and 14), Peter as a true apostle does not intend to condemn or attack anyone; His exhortation comes from love as Paul also expressed it.

1 Thes. 2:3-4 “For our appeal does not spring from error or impurity or any attempt to deceive, ⁴ but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel...”

D. False teachers may reject the second advent of Christ, but Christ's apostles are united: Christ is coming, and the time of apparent delay is for our salvation.

E. **v.16b “as they do the other Scriptures”** Peter places Paul's writings on the level of the other Scriptures, the law, the prophets, the historical and poetic books. By including Paul's letters in this same category, he is declaring equal inspiration and authority for Paul.

1 Cor. 2:13a “And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit...”

- F. **v.16b** *"There are some things in them that are hard to understand,"*
Although the Scriptures are inspired by the Holy Spirit, not everything is easy to understand because they reveal the mind of God which is enormously more complex than ours, so it is not surprising that we perceive them as strange and difficult to understand. **The Scriptures are very strange and illogical to the human mind without God.**
- G. On the other hand, when we preach, our objective is to transmit the entire counsel of God in the Scriptures (Acts 20:27) and precisely for this reason **our teaching will sometimes be complex and will require humility and effort on the part of those who preach. They listen to understand what is being taught.**
- H. Another challenge is that we know that when we preach we are addressing an audience that is visually oriented and largely influenced by screens. About 75% of the world's population over 10 years of age owns a cell phone with Internet access. Worldwide, people spend a daily average of 6 hours 37 minutes on the Internet and this greatly affects their ability to understand what is being taught. John Stott in his book on preaching says that: **'Long exposure to screens tends to produce physical laziness, intellectual weakness, emotional exhaustion, psychological confusion and moral disorientation among many other disorders for human health in general.'**

II. THE NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING

v.16b-17 *"which the ignorant and unstable twist [change the meaning of the scriptures] to their own destruction."*

- A. **As we already saw, there is a real difficulty in understanding some texts of the Bible but what aggravates this situation even more is the ignorance and inconstancy of believers. In fact Peter mentioned earlier that those who indulge in this type of superficiality can be seduced by false teachers.**
2 Ped. 2:14b *"...They entice unsteady souls"*
- B. **When a person is not constant or seeking understanding, the perception of what God does or says will always be wrong and they can take any part of the Bible and twist it to justify their behavior which eventually produces their own destruction.**
- C. **We must decisively combat our ignorance of the Word and any form of inconstancy by going to the root of it to remain constant in the ways of God because the danger of misinterpretation is not simply an intellectual matter but of perdition. Jesus, in his letters to the churches of Revelation, emphasized his zeal to keep us in correct teaching.**

Rev. 2:14-15 *"But I have a few things against you: you have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, so that they might eat food sacrificed to idols and practice sexual immorality. 15 So also you have some who hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans."*

Rev. 2:20 *"But I have this against you, that you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols."*

Rev. 2:24 *"But to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not learned what some call the deep things of Satan, to you I say, I do not lay on you any other burden."*

- D. Throughout the Scriptures and Jesus himself urges us to grow in understanding and remain firm in sound doctrine.

Rev. 2:25 *"Only hold fast what you have until I come."* (Rev. 3:11)

- E. Peter recognizes that the danger of false teaching is being carried away by the error of the libertines or those who stray, which leads Christians to lose their stability and fall. The call is to be alert, sober, watching.

2 Pet. 3:17 *"ou therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability."*

III. GROWING IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS (REMINDER)

v.18 *"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen."*

- A. In the first teaching of this second letter (September 2, 2023) we talked about the word "knowledge" in 2 Pet. It is 'epignosis' which is a revelation with participation. This makes knowledge an attitude and an activity of a dynamic nature, that is, it implies a disposition and a search on the part of the one who longs to possess it.

Pr. 2:3-5 *"yes, if you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding, 4 if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures, 5 then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God."*

- B. The Greek word 'Epígnósis' is interpreted as knowledge that is always in motion towards what it wishes to know. Diligence is required to grow in knowledge of our Lord and we do not remain sterile in this aspect.

2 Pet. 1:8 *"For if these qualities[*f*] are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."*

- C. What Peter implies here when he uses this word is that the knowledge of Jesus Christ is what we could call "the capital science of life" which gives rise to growth in the grace we all need as the events leading up to Jesus' return intensify.
- D. This word also means "to learn to know" that is, to know how to know someone, where and how they are known. The knowledge of Christ occurs in a personal relationship with Him, it is not just having information about Him. It is knowing Him as one knows someone day by day through frequent interaction.

Jn. 15:5 *"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."*

- E. It means that this knowledge is something you seek daily, as you talk to Jesus, listen to the Holy Spirit, and respond to His direction and love. Peter is stating that Jesus Christ tells us what life is and then enables us to live it properly. Jesus gives us a Christianity that is not an escape from life but a triumphant involvement in our daily lives.

Ap. 3:20 "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me."

- F. Growing in the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ should be a priority in our lives. What God wants from us is not only to fulfill certain religious tasks but also for us to know Him intimately.

Hos. 6:3 y 6 "Let us know; let us press on to know the Lord; his going out is sure as the dawn; he will come to us as the showers, as the spring rains that water the earth.... 6 For I desire steadfast love[a] and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings."

IV. REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What is the danger of not combating ignorance and/or inconstancy?
2. Do you think you have grown in your knowledge of Jesus? Explain
3. Do you feel prepared to answer those who ask you about the return of Jesus? Explain.

THIS WEEK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Holy58 organizes Movie Night "The Nativity Story" This Monday, December 18 at 6:30 p.m. \$5 tickets available at the door.
2. Special Christmas services Saturday 23rd 6:00 p.m. Sunday the 24th the first service will begin at 9:00 a.m. and the second at 11:00 a.m. The children will be with us during these services.
3. Week of Sanctification from January 2 to 5 from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. Next week we will have the devotionals ready in Spanish and English.
4. Good news! On Sunday, January 28 at 5:00 p.m. we started our first service completely in English. If you would like to support us in this service, please go to the information center to sign up. If you speak English, we invite you to come to the front table.