



WELCOME TO BIBLE HOUSE OF GRACE

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2 Peter 1

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

2 Peter 1.

INTRODUCTION: Peter probably wrote this letter from a Roman prison about A.D. 67–68, shortly before his death. Twisted versions of Christian truth were being taught, which Peter describes in vivid terms in chapter 2. He recalls his firsthand experience of Christ's glory at the Transfiguration (1:17-18). He explains the more-sure truth of the Gospel which he likens to a lamp shining in a dark place (1:19) and an antidote to heresy. In chapter 3 he focuses on those who scoff at the idea of Christ's triumphant return and the final judgment and states that as God once destroyed the earth with water, he will one day judge it again with fire. In the light of this truth Peter warns those in Christ that they should live in a manner that honours God and brings a good testimony to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ as they patiently wait for his glorious return and the salvation he has promised to all believers.

Topics.

- Our God and Saviour Jesus Christ.
- God's divine power has granted us all things.
- A rich entrance into the eternal Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- The apostles did not follow cleverly devised myths.
- We have something more-sure, the prophetic word.
- A lamp shining in a dark place until the day dawns.
- May the morning star rise in your hearts.
- Men spoke from God by the Holy Spirit.

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NOTE: for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

2 PETER 1:1-4

Peter is Addressing this letter to all those who belong to Christ.

- **2 Peter 1:1-4:** Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ: ²May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. ³His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence ⁴by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

Peter and the apostles always saw themselves as servants of the Lord. The words, "To those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours" (v1) show us the following two things:

1. Peter is addressing this letter to brothers and sisters in Christ.
2. In Christ no-one is superior to any other brother or sister.

Peter one of the greatest of the apostles, who actually walked, fellowshiped, ministered and ate with Christ sees all those in Christ as being equal regardless of gifts, talents, knowledge or whether one is the head of a worldwide church or the cleaner of it, no brother or sister is

superior to another. We are all servants of the Lord and should always see ourselves as such. The minute we begin to feel superior we can be assured pride the greatest enemy of Christ's Spirit is lurking within. The reason we are all equal is because not one of us is made righteous by our own self-effort or by adhering to ceremonial rites, holy days or by keeping religious customs and traditions no matter how strictly we adhere to them, they count for nothing in regards to righteousness that leads to eternal life. Every one of us is saved solely by the "Righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ" (v1). This is the glory and wonderer of the Christian faith. God robes us with righteousness not because we are deserving of it or have attained to some level of it, but because of our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Everyone in the family of Christ is saved by his righteousness and not theirs.

Our God and Saviour Jesus Christ: throughout history some religious teachers have used the words, "Our God and Saviour Jesus Christ" (v1) to support the mistaken theory that Jesus is God. Both God and Jesus are our Saviour, but in different aspects. God is the source of all creation and all life, before the foundations of the world began God planned and purposed in his eternal mind that His Son the Lord Jesus Christ would be the Saviour of mankind. So, God is our Saviour in that He planned the means whereby we would be saved and brought it to pass. Jesus is our Saviour in that he is the one that God planned and purposed mankind's salvation would be in. God's plan of salvation would be left bankrupt if Christ had not obeyed, but Christ would not be our Saviour if God hadn't planned and purposed him to be. These truths shine a brilliant spotlight on the truth that, both God the Father and Christ the Son are our Saviour since together they brought God's eternal plan of Salvation to pass.

Words of comfort and encouragement: since the teaching that Jesus is God has such a strong hold on much of traditional Christianity the following will encourage and comfort faithful brothers and sisters in Christ who maybe in some doubt and unsure of what to believe concerning the Father and the Son. The Bible very clearly shows that even if Jesus was God no one has to know this to be saved to eternal life since there is not one verse in the entire Bible that states:

- We must believe that Jesus is God to be saved.

Nor is there one verse from Genesis to Revelations that says:

- Whoever believes that Jesus is God the Son will be saved.

In total contrast to this silence there are literally multitudes of Scriptures throughout the pages of the New Testament that very clearly proclaim: -

- We must believe that Jesus is the Son of God to be saved.

And that say:

- Whoever believes that Jesus is the Son of God will be saved.

Surely if it was important to believe that Jesus was actually God to be saved to eternal life Jesus, the apostles and Paul would have told us at least once in all their teaching concerning salvation, but all we hear from Paul, the apostles and Jesus himself is them saying that we must believe that Jesus is the Son of God to be saved to eternal life. Jesus himself said, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God 'and' Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent (John 17:3). For further information see the title:

- Trinity (The Doctrine of the Trinity) in Various Topics (ON WEBSITE MENU).

May grace and peace be multiplied: Peter's prayer:

- May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus" (v2).

Shows Peter's desire in us gaining greater knowledge of God and the Lord is that it would multiply within ourselves and amongst us peace and grace in contrast to strife, contentions and divisions. Learning about God and of Christ is not just about gaining intellectual knowledge; it should produce the same spirit in us as God's Spirit and the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ which is love. Learning about the Father and the Son should as Peter prayed multiply the fruits of the Spirit (i.e., love, compassion, kindness, mercy, forgiveness and peace and grace) within each one of us. If our knowledge is not producing the fruits of the spirit it is simply cold legalism and the only one who benefits from this kind of knowledge is our intellectual pride.

God's diving power has granted us all things: the words, "His divine power has granted to us all things" (v3) does not mean that God has granted to us all things of this world, (i.e., wealth, riches and success etc.), as some teach, but that God through his divine grace and love in the Lord Jesus Christ has enabled us to live a life that brings honour to God and a good testimony to Christ and the Christian faith and all things needed to be saved and kept for eternal salvation. The words, "Jesus called us to his own glory and excellence" (v3) in the context of the surrounding verses means the following two things:

1. We are called to live as he lived (i.e., showing grace, mercy respect and kindness to all who came to him).
2. It is through Christ's glory and excellence (not our own) that we are made righteous before God and will inherit the promises of God.

God's precious and very great promises (v4) refer to:

- The resurrection from the dead to eternal life and everlasting glory.
- Our mortal body will be clothed with an immortal body.
- Ruling and reigning with Christ as kings and priests in the Kingdom age.
- Dwelling in the eternal light of the Father and the Son.
- Every tear of sorrow and pain being be wiped away by God.

But the greatest promise is the free gift of grace that is granted to us because of our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. grace is the most precious promise because without God's grace in Christ not one of us would be saved and therefore all other promises would worthless since they would be unattainable.

Jesus is, God's gift of grace: the following words of Paul show the enormous importance of trusting in God's grace in Christ. Paul in his letters wrote:

- I do not nullify the *GRACE* of God, for if justification were through the law (or any form of religious self-effort), then Christ died for no purpose (Gal. 2:21).

This means, when a brother or sister in Christ begin to justify themselves through the law and self-effort, they nullify the grace of God and by their actions declare that Christ's death was of no value. Equally as horrific as this Paul states:

- When we forsake *GRACE* we separate ourselves from Christ because it was only by *GRACE* that God made us alive in Christ (Gal. 5:4) (Eph. 2:5).

Paul to highlight even more the majestic glory of grace wrote with absolute boldness that:

- It is only by *GRACE* that any brother or sister has been saved (Eph. 2:8).

Paul in these verses is shining a brilliant floodlight on the truth that every brother and sister in Christ is saved, solely by faith and by grace and it is not their own doing, but the gift of God. This means that without grace

no-one can be united to Christ and whoever is without Christ is separated from God and without God no-one can be saved to eternal life. This means in regards to eternal salvation, Christ, God, Grace and Faith, are all on an equal par with each other since no-one can be saved to eternal life without any one of them. This is the reason the author in the book of Hebrews spends so many chapters brilliantly and skilfully explaining to the Hebrews that they must stop their sin of trusting in religious works, the Levitical Law and their priesthood to be counted righteous before God and start trusting in the grace of God that is in Christ and in his righteousness to be saved to eternal life. By extension this means that Christians must stop trusting in attending a church building every week, strictly adhering to ceremonial rites and holy days and keeping religious customs and traditions to be saved.

Though the practise of some of these maybe good in themselves they become grossly sinful when believers trust in them for their salvation since not one of them has any power to save to eternal life. This truth shines a brilliant spotlight upon the truth, the most precious and very great promise, is grace, which God promises to grant to all, as a pure and free gift, who have faith in his Son the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the glory and wonder of the Good News of the Gospel and the Christian faith. It is by this grace that we become partakers of the divine nature which is love and by this love not only escaped the corruption of sin, but also the laws power to declare us guilty and condemn us to eternal destruction (i.e. eternal death).

2 PETER 1:5-10

Supplement Your Faith with these Qualities, to be Fruitful.

- **2 Peter 1:5-10:** For this very reason make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, ⁶and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness ⁷and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. ⁸For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹For whoever lacks these qualities is so near sighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. ¹⁰Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall.

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The words, "For this very reason (v5), link back to the previous verse in which Peter tells us that through our faith in Christ we have become partakers of the divine nature (v4). Now he is telling us to make every effort to add to our faith virtue meaning goodness, integrity, truthfulness, honesty, morality, decency and then to these add knowledge. It is interesting to notice that when Paul was teaching the Corinthian brothers and sisters he said he could not address them as spiritual people because they were still people of the flesh, as infants in Christ who he could only feed with milk (babies feed on milk) and not solid food (the glories of prophecy and revelations etc.), because there was jealousy, strife, division and exaltation of each other among them and because of this behaviour Paul told them they were still of the flesh and behaving merely in a human way? (1 Cor. 3:11-14). After telling us to supplement our faith with virtue (i.e., goodness, integrity, truthfulness, honesty, morality and decency).

Peter now tells us to add the following things to our knowledge:

- Self-control and self-discipline.
- Steadfastness which embraces, commitment, dedication, persistence, determination, loyalty, faithfulness and trustworthiness.
- Godliness (i.e., humbleness, goodness and doing what is right and just).

- Brotherly affection; this carries the idea of friendliness and showing care and regard for others.
- Love which embraces compassion, kindness, grace, mercy and being always ready to forgive (the Bible tells us love covers a multitude of sins). Love means always doing-good to others and treating all people with decency and respect.

Here Peter gives every brother and sister the keys to be a successful and effective servant for Christ. Add these qualities to their faith and continue to increase in them and in this way they will not only be a very pleasing aroma to God, but also an effective servant of the Lord Jesus Christ and a good testimony to the Christian faith.

Spiritual blindness: it is interesting to notice that Peter says a brother or sister who places no value on these qualities of godliness and love or who thinks all they need is great intellectual Scriptural knowledge are actually spiritually blind. The Christian faith is not simply about teaching knowledge it involves growing in the fruits of the Spirit, without the deep desire to have these increase and be active in our lives Peter says we are spiritually blind. This is easy to understand if we look at the life of Christ (our perfect example of true spirituality), he not only taught the word, he manifested it through love, compassion, mercy, grace and forgiveness to everyone who came to him even the lowest of sinners Christ never turned any away who came to him and never will. If we make every effort to follow Christ in these things we will never fail or fall from our calling and our eternal inheritance (v10).

NOTE: Peter is talking to those who have been saved (v12) even though they may lack many of these qualities. The focus is not about salvation, but about being effective for God and for Christ, but should a brother or sister in Christ ignore what Peter is saying in these verses they will not only suffer loss at the judgment seat of Christ (1 Cor. 3:11-15) but also risk falling from their calling to eternal life altogether.

Water baptism and Peters advice: the fact Peter tells us to add to our faith all the above qualities clearly shows that that no-one is water baptised into Christ with all knowledge, all wisdom, all self-control, all godliness, all brotherly affection or all love etc., rather baptism is the beginning of our spiritual journey in Christ not the end. Everyone enters the body of Christ with past baggage, emotional hurts, different levels of education (especially religious) and worldviews etc. If we wait until we attain to these qualities no-one would be getting baptised, rather we begin as spiritual infants and like any child continually grow to maturity by increasing both in knowledge and in the fruits of the Spirit.

2 PETER 1:11-12

A Rich Entrance into the Eternal Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.

- **2 Peter 1:11-12:** For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. ¹²Therefore I intend always to remind you of these qualities, though you know them and are established in the truth that you have.

The words, "For in this way" refer to the previous verses in which Peter told us to add the fruits of the spirit to our faith. Now he is telling us if we do this, we will be most welcomed into the eternal Kingdom of God.

Paul in his letter to the Corinthian brothers and sisters wrote:

- If anyone builds on the foundation (Jesus Christ) with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, they will receive a reward, but if anyone's work is burned up, they will suffer loss, though they themselves will be saved, but only as through fire (1 Cor. 3:11-14).

The gold, silver and precious stones Paul has in mind are the same things that Peter is telling us in this chapter to add to our faith.

A great principal; Peter understands that the brothers and sisters he is writing to know what he is saying, but considers it important to constantly be reminding them, clearly this would be a great principal for us to remind each other since anyone of us can slip from acting in a godly manner and from showing love, grace and kindness to our brothers and sisters in the Lord and to those outside God's Kingdom.

2 PETER 1:13-15

Peter knows he is about to Die.

- **2 Peter 1:13-15:** I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to stir you up by way of reminder, ¹⁴since I know that the putting off of my body will be soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me. ¹⁵And I will make every effort so that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things.

Peters words, "Jesus Christ made clear to him that he is about to die" could mean that that Christ had given him a new revelation showing him that he was soon to die, but it is more likely that he is referring to Christ words to him after his resurrection when Jesus said:

- Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go" (this he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God) (John 21:18-19).

Many years had now elapsed since this remarkable prophecy was uttered and Peter was growing old so he clearly felt that this predicted event was drawing near.

NOTE: some have taught that Jesus words, "You will stretch out your hands" means that Peter would suffer and die on the cross as Jesus did, but the following words, "And another will dress you" show that it could simply mean that God will allow Peter to grow to such an old age that others will have to care for him. While the words, "Others will carry you where you do not want to go" most likely mean they will carry him to the grave. In the following verses the disciples thought John the beloved disciple would remain alive until Christ returned it is certain that this was Peters hope as it is of all of us. I have heard many Christian men state they hope that Christ returns before they reach the nursing home and the grave. It seems hardly likely (to me anyway) that God would have such a faithful man as Peter crucified in his old age.

How would that bring glory to God, an old man nailed to a cross? The glory is that God enabled Peter to proclaim the Gospel until he was in his old age this is the heartfelt desire of all faithful servants of the Lord. Certainly, there are anecdotal rumours amongst religious circles that Peter was crucified upside-down because he felt ashamed to be crucified as his Lord was, but this not only goes against the forgiveness of Christ's but also against the teaching of the Gospel. There can be no-doubt Peter clearly understood he was saved by his faith and God's grace so there is no-way he would feel ashamed, since that would mean he was trusting in his own self-efforts to be counted righteous and thereby make Christ's crucifixion serve no purpose.

2 PETER 1:16-18

The Apostles did not Follow Cleverly Devised Myths.

- **2 Peter 1:16-18:** For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his

majesty. ¹⁷For when he received honour and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased," ¹⁸we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain.

It seems there were men who were claiming that the Christian faith especially the return of the Lord is simply a story of cleverly devised myths and fables in the same way as many of the surrounding religions were. So, Peter to strength the faith of those who might be influenced by such rumours reminds them that not one of the apostles learned the Gospel from man's clever imagination, but actually saw the majestic glory of Christ. This majestic glory of Christ refers to the following awe-inspiring and breathtaking moment when Peter, James and John were standing on a high mountain and Jesus was transfigured (changed) before their eyes, his face shone like the sun, his clothes became white as light, a bright cloud overshadowed them and a voice from the cloud said:

- This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him (Matt. 17:1-5).

Peter to comfort those who might have been thinking that Christ was just another man tells them that even before his death and resurrection God revealed to the apostles that Jesus was the Son of God and who he claimed to be not only by transforming Jesus in brilliant light, glory and majesty that no mortal mind can conceive but also by speaking from heaven telling Peter, James and John that Christ is God's beloved Son.

2 PETER 1:19

We have Something More Sure, the Prophetic Word.

- **2 Peter 1:19:** And we have something more sure, the prophetic word, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.

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Though Peter (in the previous verses) has just finished saying that that Peter, James and John were eyewitnesses of Christ's glory and majesty on the mountain of transfiguration, he was no-doubt fully aware that certain men (especially the Jews) might cast doubt on the apostles' testimony by making trivial and unreasonable objections about unimportant points, so he now tells everyone that is seeking God that there is an even greater proof of Christ's majesty and glory than the testimony of Peter, James and John and that is:

- The prophetic word" (v19).

Since Peter in the following verses says:

- No prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit"

There can be no doubt that the more sure word of prophecy refers to the numerous majestic prophecies contained in the Old Testament. Peter is saying should anyone be in doubt regarding the testimony of Peter, James and John these prophecies will furnish an even stronger proof of Christ glory and majesty than the testimony of the apostles. This is because they were written over hundreds of years by different prophets from different periods of history and different countries and all this long before Christ appeared which means there could be no collusion between the different prophets and writers yet not only is there one beautiful theme that flows from Genesis through to revelations, but many have come to pass in stunning detail and many are still to come to pass in glorious wonder and breathtaking awe. Fulfilled prophecy is not only proof that the Christian faith is not built on cleverly devised myths, but is also proof of inspiration because throughout the Old Testament there are Scripture predictions of future events that were uttered long before the events transpired that no

mere human wisdom, intelligence or foresight could have anticipated especially in such minute and specific detail as the prophets proclaimed and psalmist sang. No mortal man no matter how brilliant or clairvoyant could without the inspiration of God possibility predict, guess or anticipate the hundreds of predictions concerning Israel, the land of Canaan, Babylon, Assyria, Egypt, and numerous other prophecies that have been fulfilled throughout history clearly showing that no biblical prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but by men who spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit (2Pet. 1:21).

**FOR THOSE WHO UNDERSTAND THE WONDER, BEAUTY AND
GLORY OF BIBLE PROPHECY, THERE IS NO-DOUBT, THAT
SCRIPTURE IS THE REVELATION OF THE
MIND AND WILL OF GOD**

A lamp shining in a dark place: the words, "Pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place" (v19) means that the prophecies resemble a lamp shining in a dark room, the lamp make the objects in the room distinct which were before unseen and things which would be otherwise invisible, but there is still much that is only dimly revealed and much in the room we are not able to see. The idea here is that as majestic and awe-inspiring as prophecies are they do not give a perfect light or remove all obscurity, but that they shed some light on objects which would otherwise be entirely dark, and that the light which they do give is so valuable that we should make every effort to seek out for ourselves the priceless riches and treasures the light of the prophecies do shine upon.

Until the day dawns: the reference in the words, "Until the day dawns" (v19) refers to the morning light as compared to the lamp, clearly the morning sun brings far more light than a single lamp. The idea is that we should attend to the light given us by the prophecies until the obscurity of prophecy is revealed in much clearer and far more distinct light by the clearness of events when they actually occur and dispel those things that remain shadowed and obscured by the dimness of light. The difference between the light of the lamp and the light of the sun is the difference between seeing an event by faith and prophecy and between seeing the actual reality of it shining all around us. Peter in these verses is directing the mind of all believers to that glorious period, of time when all prophecy will shine in absolute clearness when our Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ returns to receive his brothers and sisters to himself and to everlasting glory where all will be pure light.

John in the book of Revelation wrote:

- The holy city, New Jerusalem has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there (Rev. 21:23-25).
- Night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever (Rev. 22:5).

Is there any other religion on planet earth that has such awe-inspiring majestic and glorious prophecies, visions and promises for its followers (this author has not found one). While we patiently wait for this glorious and eternal world to come, Peter is encouraging us to walk in the light that we have and diligently study the prophecies of the Old Testament (especially those still unfulfilled) and of those in the New Testament which direct our mind onward to brighter and more glorious scenes than this world has yet witnessed.

**BIBLE PROPHECIES ARE A CHEERING LAMP TO GUIDE OUR FEET
THROUGH THE DARKNESS UNTIL THAT ILLUSTRIOUS
AND GLORIOUS DAY SHALL DAWN**

The morning star rises in your hearts: the words, "The morning star rises in your hearts" (v19) literally refers to the bright star that at certain periods of the year begins the day in the most magnificent brilliance. Figuratively the star is Christ and the reference is to that glorious day when Christ returns in the full revelation of his glory and the splendour of his Kingdom and his light shines its beams deep into our hearts and that hidden but glorious light and love that dwells within the heart of every brother and sister in Christ rises in breathtaking and uncontrollable excitement and joy at the sight of seeing their risen Saviour. Then all will be clear, clearer and brighter than any other time that has yet occurred on our world.

Bible prophecies are as the morning star that shines brighter
than the dawning sun as it heralds in the new day

2 PETER 1:20-21

Men spoke from God by the Holy Spirit.

- **2 Peter 1:20-21:** knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. ²¹For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Peter is saying not one of God's prophets spoke from their own mind, no Bible messages or prophecies are birthed from human thinking or human imagination. The Holy Spirit influenced and inspired the prophets of the Old and New Testaments to speak the messages of God and it is these messages that are now written down and recorded in the cannon of the Bible.

The Holy Spirit enabled the prophets to speak of:

- Christ's birth, suffering, ministry and his death and resurrection.
- Christ's spiritual Kingdom his literal Kingdom and his eternal Kingdom.

NOTE: God is the source of the Holy Spirit and spoke his messages by the inspiration and influence of the Holy Spirit though men he chose. When the Holy Spirit testifies of Christ through the prophets it is spoken of as Christ (or the Spirit of Christ) being in the prophets. This is because they are by the Holy Spirit speaking of Christ and the things concerning him.

Keys to understanding prophecy: A key to understanding many prophecies of the Bible is to know that the verses are not always written in chronological order. It is almost as though the prophet is so inspired that he immediately speaks the words as they come to him. They are then recorded in the order that the prophet spoke them, but that does not always mean they are in the actual chronological order that they will unfold throughout history. Sometimes the latter verses of a chapter may actually be the first events to take place in God's foreordained plan of events.

In the book of Revelation this principle applies not only to the individual verses of the chapters but also too many of the chapters themselves

Bible prophecy and present tense: often a prophecy is spoken in the present tense as though the event has already happened when in actual reality the fulfilment of it may still be many years away. This is because the prophet is seeing the vision in the present moment and speaks it as he sees it in present time. The people the prophet is speaking to know when the prophecy is a future event, but sometimes it can be difficult for those reading it thousands of years later to realise, because of the tense it is written in. When a prophet speaks, he is often speaking as the voice of God, therefore the words he speaks are guaranteed to come to pass.

This is another reason the prophet can speak the words of God in the present moment because they are certain to happen at the right time in the future. Another reason many future prophecies are spoken in the present tense, is because the prophet is speaking the words of God or the vision as they come to him in his time. The prophet himself may not always be aware of the echoes contained in his prophecy or that the words he is speaking, actually have contained within them the ability to transcend time and travel thousands of years through history to a future age or a future person

The following verses are a good example of this principal:

- For a nation (Babylon) has come up against my land (Judah), powerful and beyond number; its teeth are lions' teeth, and it has the fangs of a lioness. ⁷It has laid waste my vine and splintered my fig tree; it has stripped off their bark and thrown it down; their branches are made white (Joel 1:6-7).

This event has not taken place, yet Joel speaks it in the past tense as though it has already happened. This is simply because Joel is speaking what he is seeing happening in his vision. God is giving Joel a complete picture in his mind of what is about to take place. Joel in a sense is watching a movie being played out in his mind and is simply speaking it out as the events take place, thus the reason Joel speaks in the past tense, in his mind the events have already taken place, but in real life they are still to be played out in the future.

The Bible today and prophecy: prophecy properly means to predict future events, but it also means to declare the divine will of God; to interpret the purposes of God; or to make known in any way the truth of God, which is designed to influence people. Though its first meaning is to predict or foretell future events the word 'prophecy' is not limited to this meaning since those who did prophecy were messengers of God, and as they commonly proclaimed predictions, instructions, and exhortations in regard to the sins, dangers and duties of people the word 'prophecy' came to denote any who warned, threatened or in any way communicated the will of God. Today the word prophecy refers to proclaiming the messages of the Bible, since what we have in written form today is the prophetic word of God. During the generations of Paul the Scriptures were not neatly put together as we have them in the Canon of the Bible today, added to this their message was totally new so the people had to rely on others receiving visions and prophecies, but today we have all those spoken prophecies recorded in the pages of the Bible, therefore when a person is proclaiming God's word and the words of the Lord and the apostles they are proclaiming the prophetic word of God. We do not need any more knowledge beyond what is recorded in the Bible since it has recorded within its pages God's plans, purposes, will and eternal outcome for all mankind. Today whoever proclaims the word of God is proclaiming prophecy.

THE INSPIRED WORD OF GOD

Some religious teachers proclaim that the King James Bible is the only Bible that contains the inspired word of God, but this is foolish for many reasons. The obvious one is that it is very difficult for people of our generation to read since we do not speak in the manner the King James Bible is written in today. Certainly, it was the common language of that generation and is a great Bible and beautifully written, but it is not the only inspired word of God. This is because it is not every individual word of the Bible that is inspired, if this was the case only those who could read the original manuscripts would be able to read the inspired word of God. Added to this if the King James Bible is the only Bible that contains the inspired word of God the Chinese, Mexicans, the French and people from all other foreign languages would never be able to read the inspired word of God since all their Bibles would be translated into a totally different language. It is the messages the Bible contains that is the inspired word

of God, not the language or the individual words, but the messages the individual words joined together as complete sentences proclaim. For those who have difficulty reading the King James Bible here is the Good News all well recognised modern Bibles contain the same messages as the King James Bible does. Whichever of these Bibles a person seeking God choses to read there is no doubt if their heart is right before God, they will not only find the way to eternal life, but also the love and grace of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.

A personal suggestion: should a new seeker of God be reading this I would suggest (and it is only a suggestion) that you spend all your time in the New Testament until you discover Christ's love for you and God's abundant grace and know that the Lord accepts with open arms all who come to him with an honest and humble heart despite what the mind may be convicting or condemning those seeking him of and then on this foundation discover the Old Testament. Jesus said:

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son,
that whoever believes in him should not
perish but have eternal life.
(John 3:16).

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.

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