

**Keep going (2)**

**2 Peter 1:12-21 (page 1018)**

A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away...

**1. The Bible isn't cleverly devised myths**

i) The New Testament apostles are eye witnesses  
v16-18

ii) The Old Testament prophets are God-inspired  
v19-21

**2. So what?**

i) If you're an apostle, the implication is...  
v12-15

ii) If you're a Bible teacher, the implication is...  
V16, 20

iii) If you want all you need for life and godliness, the implication is...  
V19

***To think through...***

*'...pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place...'* What will that mean for you, in practise?

## Some background on 2 Peter

### The author

Simon Peter, the apostle (1:1). In some sense it's a 'last words' letter from Peter, who seems to know that he'll be dead soon (see 1:14).

### The audience

3:1 suggests he's writing to the same crowd who received 1 Peter (see 1 Peter 1:1). There's no suggestion that Peter's audience are going astray at the moment, in fact they are described as being well 'established' (1:12) and 'waiting' (3:14) for the new heavens and new earth.

### The reason for writing

Unlike in some letters where there's a presenting problem that needs correction, 2 Peter seems largely pre-emptive. Peter is worried that false teachers will get in amongst the churches (2:1), leading some astray (2:2), exploiting others (2:3), causing believers to lose their stability (3:17) and fall away (1:10).

### The false teachers

They seem to be saying that aspects of the apostolic teaching are myth (1:16, 3:16), and in particular deny the second coming of Jesus, and the judgement and new creation which he will inaugurate (3:4). This denial of the future is connected with a denial of the lordship of Jesus (1:16, 2:1, 2:10), and an increasing trend towards ungodly living (2:2, 2:4-10ff).

### What's the attraction?

The false teachers are promising some kind of freedom (2:19), probably freedom in terms of lifestyle. Possibly also freedom from the fear of future judgement (3:4), and more generally they probably breed a sense of complacency that now is more important than the future, with their denial of the day of the Lord. The pressures to be independent, ungodly and now-focussed are really the same as those in 1 Peter - except whereas there the pressure was mainly from the world around, here it stems from teaching within the Christian community.

### What's the solution?

The tone of 2 Peter is interesting. In many ways there's a sense of urgency as Peter describes the danger of the false teachers and the need to make every effort (1:5), be diligent (3:14) and take care not to be carried away in error (3:16). But the antidote is not new or complicated. Peter's task is to stir them (and us) up by way of reminder (1:12-13, 15) of things already known through the predictions of God's prophets and the commands of Jesus' apostles (3:1-2).

In this context knowledge is a big theme. Through knowing Jesus we already have all we need to withstand the danger and stand firm – so don't panic!

*May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the **knowledge** of God (1:2)*

*divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the **knowledge** of him (1:3)*

*For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the **knowledge** of our Lord Jesus Christ (1:8)*

*But grow in the grace and **knowledge** of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (3:18)*



*'...pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place...'*

2 Peter 1:19