

Text: 2 Pt 3.1-2

I take our title from the KJV of our text:

This second epistle, **beloved**, I now write unto you; in *both* which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: That ye may **be mindful** of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour:

Read 2 Pt 3.1-2 in our version

Years ago, when I had a class with Jesse Boyd, he referred to this chapter as containing the “beloved be’s of 2 Peter 3.” It’s a good way to outline the chapter, but we will just look at the first two verses and the first “beloved be” tonight. (You will find the other two at v. 14 and v. 17. There is one more “beloved” in v. 8.)

The word “beloved” conveys a tender attitude, the attitude of a true pastor, a true shepherd, to the flock God has given him.

As we turn from Peter’s strong denunciation of the false teachers in chapter 2, we find Peter turning his eye to his readers. His concern is for them. He wants them to have clear heads and clean hearts. That is why he writes, and that is what he tells them as he writes our text.

Wiersbe puts it this way:

“Peter has dealt with the character and conduct of the apostates in 2 Peter 2, and now he deals with their false teaching.”¹

Peter wants his readers to “be mindful.” But as he turns to deal with their false teaching, he wants his readers to be mindful *of the truth he and the rest of the apostles taught them*, **not** the doctrine of the false teachers.

There is value in knowing what false teachers teach, especially if you have a ministry of preaching to the victims of false teachers, but it is more important *for your soul* to know what the Bible teaches.

¹ Warren W Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 2 (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1996), 462.

Proposition: Occupy your sincere mind with Bible teaching as the top priority for protection from false teachers and false teaching.

I. Stirring the sincere minds (1)

A. Urgency

1. Several words convey **urgency**

- a. Now
- b. Second letter
- c. Stirring up
- d. Reminder

2. Now

- a. Lit. “already”
- b. Implies this letter follows closely on a previous letter

3. Second letter

a. Four suggestions

- 1) “(1) Some think 2 Peter is not a unity, that its present composition stitches together more than one letter.
- 2) “(2) Other scholars have suggested that the first letter was Jude and the second one is 2 Peter
- 3) “(3) More plausible is the idea that Peter wrote another letter that has since been lost.
- 4) “(4) Peter referred to 1 Peter. This is still the majority view among commentators.²

b. No reason for anything but #4

- 1) Occam’s Razor: the simplest explanation is most likely
- 2) There is no evidence *at all* for any other letters by Peter
- 3) The exhortations of 1 Peter concern eschatology

² Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 368–69.

4) The exhortations of 2 Peter (as we will see) turn to this subject also

(probably denied by the false teachers Peter attacks)

c. The point: The second letter followed the first because Peter was very anxious (“urgent”) about the message

4. Stirring up

a. The word sometimes used of “waking someone up, shaking them alert from sleep”

b. When Jesus was asleep on the boat in the storm, the disciples “awoke him” (“stirred him up”) (Mk 4.38)

c. The reason for waking someone up is some kind of urgency... I can’t let you sleep, get up!

5. Reminder

“Everybody is ignorant,’ said Will Rogers, ‘only on different subjects.’”³

B. Sincerity

1. Peter is writing to Christians

2. They have sincere minds

a. Implies “wholesome, pure, right, good” ... or “sincere”

b. Implies that continued lethargy (spiritual sleep) is dangerous for the purity of their Christian minds

1) Tempted to defect to false teaching

2) Or at least danger of being tainted by false teaching

How many sincere believers today are captured by some kind of error that distracts from the proper service of Christ?

³ Warren W Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 2 (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1996), 461.

3. Nevertheless, sincerity doesn't protect from lethargy

"The purest minds need stirring up at times. It would be a great pity to stir up impure minds. That would only be to do mischief. Pure minds may be stirred as much as you please, and the more the better."⁴

II. Remembering the inspired words (2)

A. Purpose: remembering

1. Purpose infinitive, points back to "stir up" in v. 1
2. Stirring up so you will remember

B. Subject: the Scriptures (*i.e.*, the teaching, or doctrine they were taught)

1. The teaching includes the word beforehand by the prophets: OT
 - a. This reminds us of 1.12-15
 - b. In ch. 1 he goes on to discuss the process of inspiration (and its value) — 1.16-21
 - c. These "before spoken utterances" is in the perfect tense: speaking done long ago, still speaking today
2. And of course, the commandments of Jesus taught by apostles: NT
 - a. Lit. "the of your apostles commandment of the Lord and Saviour"⁵
 - b. The commandment in the context (see following vv.) likely refers to second coming – Jesus commanded alertness
 - 1) Mt 24.33
 - 2) Mk 13.33
 - 3) Lk 12.40
 - c. Note: Peter puts the apostles on the same level as the OT prophets

⁴ Charles H Spurgeon, *Spurgeon Commentary: 2 Peter*, ed. Elliot Ritzema and Carrie Sinclair Wolcott, Spurgeon Commentary Series (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014), 2 Pt 3.1.

⁵ Hiebert, 140.

“Peter believed in the inspiration of the very words of Scripture. He was not one of those ‘advanced thinkers’ who would, if they could, tear the very soul out of the Bible and leave us nothing at all.”⁶

“Peter wrote to remind his readers ‘to remember the words’—the very words—’proclaimed beforehand by the holy prophets’ (2 Pet 3:2). ‘Oh!’ says one, ‘But words do not signify. It is the inward sense that is really important.’

“That is just what the fool said about eggshells. He said that they did not signify; it was only the inward life-germ of the chick within that was important. So he broke all the shells, and thereby destroyed the life that was within.

“We contend for every word of the Bible, and believe in the verbal and plenary inspiration of Holy Scripture, believing indeed that there can be no other inspiration but that. If the words could be taken from us, the sense itself would be gone.”⁷

Conclusion:

So here we are... the words of the Lord and his apostles ought to occupy our minds. Peter reminds us. In fact, he is stirring us up, shaking us awake!

Proposition: Occupy your sincere mind with Bible teaching as the top priority for protection from false teachers and false teaching.

Be alert, and be on the watch!

⁶ Spurgeon, 2 Pt 3.2.
⁷ Spurgeon, 2 Peter, 2 Pt 3.2.