

2 Peter 1:2 Commentary

PREVIOUS

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2 Peter: True and False Prophecy
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Chart from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission

2 PETER TRUE AND FALSE PROPHECY

Cultivation of Christlike Character			Condemnation of False Teachers			Confidence in the Return of Christ		
Greeting to Saints 2Pe 1:1-2	Growth in Christ 2Pe 1:3-14	Grounds of Belief 2Pe 1:15-21	Danger of False Teachers 2Pe 2:1-3	Demise of False Teachers 2Pe 2:4-9	"Decor" of False Teachers 2Pe 2:10-22	Mockers in the Last Days 2Pe 3:1-7	Manifest Day of the Lord 2Pe 3:8-10	Maturity in light of that Day 2Pe 3:11-18
Know Your Salvation		Know Your Scripture		Know Your Adversaries			Know Your Prophecy	
True Prophecy (True Knowledge)				False Prophets (False Teachers)			Final Prophecy (Day of the Lord)	
Holiness				Heresy			Hope	
Development of Faith				Denunciation of False Teachers			Design of The Future	

2 Peter 1:2 [Grace](#) and [peace](#) be [multiplied](#) ([3SAPO](#)) to you in the [knowledge](#) of [God](#) and of [Jesus](#) our [Lord](#) ([NASB: Lockman](#))

Greek: [charis humin kai eirene plethuntheie \(3SAPO\) en epignosei tou theou kai lesou tou kuriou hemon](#)

Amplified: May grace (God's favor) and peace (which is perfect well-being, all necessary good, all spiritual prosperity, and freedom from fears and agitating passions and moral conflicts) be multiplied to you in [the full, personal, precise, and correct] knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

NLT: May God bless you with his special favor and wonderful peace as you come to know Jesus, our God and Lord, better and better. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Phillips: May you know more and more of grace and peace as your knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord grows deeper. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

Wuest: "[Sanctifying] grace to you and [tranquilizing] peace be multiplied in the sphere of and by the experiential knowledge [which the believer has] of God, even Jesus, our Lord." ([Eerdmans](#))

Young's Literal: Grace to you, and peace be multiplied in the acknowledgement of God and of Jesus our Lord!

GRACE: charis:

- **Grace:** Nu 6:24-26 Da 4:1 6:25 Ro 1:7 1Pe 1:2 Jude 1:2 Rev 1:4
- [2 Peter 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Spurgeon says that "Blessed men scatter blessings. When the benediction of God rests upon us, we pour out benedictions upon others." (The Second Coming)

Grace ([5485](#)) (**charis [word study]**) is God's free and unmerited favor bestowed on guilty man in and through Jesus Christ (by faith). Beloved, we must continually remember that God in His mercy does not give us what we do deserve but God in His **grace** does give us what we don't deserve and could never otherwise obtain. His supply of amazing grace is endless for He is "**the God of all grace**" (1Pe 5:10-note), and He dispenses His grace to us through Jesus Christ (Jn 1:16, 17) and His Spirit (cp Jn 7:37, 38, 39).

I agree with **Kenneth Wuest** that in this **context** the God's **grace** refers to His "sanctifying **grace**, the work of the Holy Spirit producing in the yielded believer **His** own fruit. This **peace** is sanctifying peace, the tranquility of heart that is the result of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the believer." (click discussion) ([Word Studies - Eerdmans](#))

Grace in our lives provides the bedrock for our **peace**, first **peace** with God (the result of our being justified or declared righteous by faith in Christ's righteous sacrifice - Ro 5:1-note) and the **peace** of God (which depends on a clear conscience, ready confession of sins and repenting from those sins - Php 4:6, 7-see **notes** Php 4:6; 4:7). God's **grace** and **peace** are **multiplied** toward us in true knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. It follows as we grow in our knowledge of God and Jesus, as we are taught by His Spirit when we read His Word, and then as we obey His Word (enabled by His grace and Spirit), we will have grace and peace multiplied in our lives.

Marvelous is the implication of infinite **grace** (2Cor 8:9) multiplied by infinite **peace** (Php 4:6, 7-see notes Php 4:6; 4:7). The product can only be eternal fullness of joy (Jn 15:11). This **grace** is **multiplied** in the experiential knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord (Who is "full of grace and truth" Jn 1:16, 17). What should be our condition to "maximize" our receipt of His amazing grace? Remember the maxim that God is opposed to proud but gives grace to humble (2Cor 12:9-note; 2Co 12:10-note, Jas 4:6-note, Jas 4:7-note, Jas 4:8-note) Take in the Word, submit to the Word, obey the Word, and head knowledge begins to become heart knowledge by the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit.

Shenton writes that...

Grace is a favourable disposition towards the unworthy and wretched, and the free bestowal of kindness on one who has no claim to it. It is the exercise of love towards an inferior or dependent object and is commonly described as undeserved favour. God's grace is his unmerited goodness freely given to those who have forfeited it and who are, by nature, under the sentence of eternal death.

The grace of God is a self-existent principle inherent in the divine nature that appears to us as a self-caused tendency to pity the wretched, spare the guilty, welcome the outcast, and bring into favour those who before were under just disapproval. Divine grace means that God takes the initiative and seeks to communicate his favours and blessings to his creatures. He stoops to embrace the worthless and unattractive, and to bestow benefits on the undeserving.

The grace of God is eternal. Just as God's essence is eternal and immutable, so his unmerited love to man is from everlasting to everlasting and without the slightest hint of change. He has always been and will always be the 'God of all grace' (1 Peter 5:10). This grace was 'given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time' (2 Timothy 1:9) and will last through endless ages. It was planned before it was exercised, purposed before it was imparted, eternal before it was manifested. (Our Perfect God : A Summary of the Attributes of God (46). Leominster, UK: Day One Publications)

AND PEACE: kai eirene:

- [2 Peter 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Peace (1515)(**Eirene [word study]** from **eiro** = to join together) in its literal meaning is the binding or joining together what is broken or divided thus setting the divided parts at one again. In other words, to "make peace" is to join together that which is separated. (For an excellent illustration of this truth see **One Heart**). This meaning is conveyed somewhat by our modern expression of "*having it all together*".

Eirene, originally was used to describe an ordered life which was possible when people were not at war. Later, the concept was expanded to include an inner, personal peace. "Peace" is mentioned over 60 times in the NT, with this latter meaning. There is a peace that "*the world gives*" but the peace that all men desperately need is found only in the Strong Tower of **Jehovah Shalom** in Whom believers experience safety and peace, being "set...securely on high" [Heb = sagab = word study] (Ps 91:14 see Spurgeon) [Remember to click link for sermons on right side of page that opens] in the midst of very real afflictions and adversity (Jn 14:27; 16:33).

As stated, in secular Greek **eirene** was originally associated with cessation or absence of war. Before we were born again by God's Spirit, we were "at war" with God. But when we were saved by grace through faith, Jehovah Shalom

rescued (drew us, snatched from danger - the "jaws of hell" and delivered) us from the domain (power that Satan had over us when we were in Adam) of darkness, and transferred (used in Greek to describe the removal from one place to another) us to the kingdom of His beloved Son (we are no longer "in Adam" and under the subject to the power of Sin and Satan both of which are well versed in destroying men's "peace") (Col 1:13-note, cf Acts 26:18)

In other words, believers have changed "**armies**" and more importantly "**commanders**" - we are no longer subject to the right and might of Satan but are now willing subjects, even bondservants, of our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. We are no longer at war with God because we have been

been justified by faith" and now "we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Ro 5:1-note).

GENUINE "HOLISTIC HEALTH"

In Christ our lives are made whole, our relationships are harmonized, and we now can experience the spiritual and psychological wholeness that God intended for human beings in the original creation. We have been "re-created" as it were. God's supernatural peace (the fruit of His Spirit indwelling us, Gal 5:22-note) can now provide freedom from disquieting or oppressive thoughts or emotions. Jesus did not end all human wars, but He does make it possible to end the war between God and man. His death is our peace, our means of reconciliation with God, Who we can now call "Abba, Father".

Peace does not mean the absence of pain or absence of conflict or absence of testing times, etc, etc. But divine peace, the peace that the Spirit gives, does mean that in our pain, in our conflicts, in our testing times, etc, we can have genuine inner peace (our soul at "rest", cp Mt 11:28, 29, 30 - **Stop a moment - Let me ask you "Is your soul at rest today?"** It can be! Seek the Prince of Peace, Is 9:6 and by faith [trust and obey - don't leave off the "obey" part!] rest in Him!) because we know Jehovah Shalom and we know He is in control. TRUE PEACE comes not the absence of conflict but from the presence of God, Jehovah Shalom.

Click the following links more discussion on eirene (including discussion of the distinction between "peace with God" and the "peace of God")

Most detailed discussion, eirene #2, eirene #3; see notes on Jehovah Shalom, Jehovah our Peace

To reiterate, the effect of receiving God's grace is a state of peace. And so we see that the Biblical order is always grace and then

peace. Dear reader have you received His grace by placing your faith in Christ Jesus? Do you lack inner peace that all is well between you and the Almighty? If you are still at war with God, then the Spirit is calling you to understand that you are dead in your trespasses and sins (and at war with God), but that you can be made alive in Christ by repentance and belief in Christ's sacrifice on the Cross for all of your personal sins, past, present and future. Believe and you shall be saved...and forever at peace with God in Christ Jesus the Lord, Who is the believer's Peace now and forever! Glory to God!

The wonderful truth of salvation is that we can once again be at peace with our Creator for as Isaiah proclaims to Israel (specifically to the faithful remnant in Israel in the coming Messianic Age, the Millennium, [read the context - and note the time phrase "in that day"] but the principle is applicable to all believers)...

The steadfast of mind Thou wilt keep in **perfect peace** (literally "Shalom, Shalom" - the idea of being possessing full, genuine, well-being), Because he trusts in Thee. (Isaiah 26:3).

NLT paraphrases it "You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in You, whose thoughts are fixed on You!"

Remember that **peace** is a state of being as well as an attitude, denoting the well being that flows from having experienced reconciliation and forgiveness through the gospel of Jesus Christ. The believer's "peace" in one sense is independent of our circumstances (Jn 14:27; Php 4:6, 7-see **notes** Php 4:6; 4:7) because it is a divine "**fruit**" brought forth in a life yielded to the control of the Holy Spirit (Ga 5:22-note)

Peter now goes on to explain that grace and peace in a believer's life are inseparably linked to our knowledge of God and His Son Jesus our Lord.

MacDonald explains this relationship between grace and peace and knowledge noting that

The better we know God, the more we experience **grace and peace**. We do better by dwelling in the secret place of the Most High than by making occasional visits there (See Quiet Time - 7 Minutes With God). Those who live in the sanctuary rather than in the suburbs find the secret of God's grace and peace. (Amen!) ([Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

ONE HEART: A HEART AT PEACE - Jim Walton was translating the NT for the Muinane people of La Sabana in the jungles of Colombia. But he was having trouble with the word **peace**. During this time, Fernando, the village chief, was promised a 20-minute plane ride to a location that would have taken him 3 days to travel by walking. The plane was delayed in arriving at La Sabana, so Fernando departed on foot. When the plane finally came, a runner took off to bring Fernando back. But by the time he had returned, the plane had left. Fernando was livid because of the mix-up. He went to Jim and launched into an angry tirade. Fortunately, Walton had taped the chief's diatribe. When he later translated it, he discovered that the chief kept repeating the phrase, "*I don't have one heart.*" Jim asked other villagers what having "*one heart*" meant, and he found that it was like saying, "*There is nothing between you and the other person.*" That, Walton realized, was just what he needed to translate the word **peace**. To have **peace** with God means that there is nothing--no sin, no guilt, no condemnation--that separates us. And that **peace** with God is possible only through Christ (Ro 5:1-notes).

Do you have "one heart" with God today? If not confess whatever is between you and Him, turn from that sin (seemetanoia) and pray the prayer of David [a sinner {Ps 32:3, Pr 28:13, Ps 32:5} but a sincere seeker = Acts 13:22] in Ps 86:11 [Ps 86:11NIV - What kind of heart does he plead for? Why? cp the value of godly "fear" = 1Pe 1:17-note, 2Co 7:1-note, Job 1:1] and know He will hear in heaven [He 4:16-note, 1Ki 8:30] and He will grant the request of your heart [not just your "lips" but a sincere prayer from your heart! cp Lk 18:11, 13] [1Jn 5:14,15]).

BE MULTIPLIED TO YOU: humin...plethuntheie (3SAPO):

- [2 Peter 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Spurgeon - You have some measure of these choice blessings; may you have a great many times as much! When we go to the multiplication table, we not only multiply by two and by three, but we can multiply by a hundred, we can multiply by ten thousand. Oh, that God would thus multiply to us the grace and the peace that He has already given to us! "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you" The more we know of God, the more grounds and reasons shall we have for enjoying grace and peace, and the more we know of God and of Jesus our Lord, the more will our enjoyment of grace and peace be multiplied. (**2 Peter Commentaries**)

Be multiplied([4129](#)) (plethuno from plethos = fullness from pletho = to fill) means to be made full, grow, increase or be multiplied. In the active sense it means to cause to increase, to cause to become greater in number, to multiply (increase in number especially greatly).

See **J H Jowett's** comments

To cause to become greater in magnitude, as when God flooded the earth (Ge 7:17, 18 where plethuno is used in the Lxx)

Literally **plethuno** describes a numerical increase in Acts 6:1, 7, 7:17, 9:31 (Lxx use in Ex 1:20, 1Sa 14:19)

Figuratively **plethuno** is used to describe an increase in **lawlessness** in the last of the last days (Mt 24:12 - and this increase could easily be both in a numerical sense and magnitude, greater and greater degrees of lawlessness), an increase in the **spread of the Word** (Acts 12:24), an increase in a harvest of **righteousness** (2Co 9:10), and in prayers for increased grace and peace (2Pe 1:2, Jude 1:2)

NIDNTT has this background on plethuno and the related noun form plethos...

The noun **plethos** is attested from Homer onwards. It is connected with the root ple- , meaning fullness, and means a crowd or multitude, in contrast to a small number or an individual. It can also denote what is too big to count. The verb plethuno (in which the ending **-uno** means make) means to make full, to fill; intrans. to be full.

The noun **plethos** is used: (a) as a general term denoting a great number of things, and, in connection with time, duration; (b) with persons, a multitude, crowd; as a military term, a mass of troops; from a sociological and derogatory standpoint, the mass which lacks culture and moral understanding; in a democracy, the total number of voters or the majority that turns the scales in political decisions; people, population; the assembly (e.g. of the citizens of Athens); in religious communities, the body of members, the whole group, the congregation. The plural can be used to give emphasis (crowds, flocks). Otherwise, an adjective can be added to give emphasis. **Plethos** can also be used as an adj., many (the comparative, more, the great majority; and the superlative, most). The meaning of the verb **plethuno** corresponds to that of the noun: transitively = increase, enlarge, multiply; in the passive and intransitively = to increase in number, grow, fill, be full. ([Brown, Colin. Editor. New International Dictionary of NT Theology. 1986. Zondervan](#))

Plethuno -12 times in 11 verses in the NT...clearly a favorite verb of Peter who used it in the salutation of both of his epistles...

Matthew 24:12 "Because lawlessness is **increased**, most people's love will grow cold.

Acts 6:1 Now at this time while the disciples were **increasing** in number, a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic Jews against the native Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of food.

Acts 6:7 The word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to **increase** greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith.

Acts 7:17 "But as the time of the promise was approaching which God had assured to Abraham, the people increased (auxano) and **multiplied** in Egypt,

Acts 9:31 So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to **increase**. (in numbers)

Acts 12:24 But the **word of the Lord** (synonymous with the gospel) continued to grow and to be **multiplied**.

Comment: How is the Word of the Lord (the gospel) "multiplied"? The Word (Gospel in this context) functions like seed, which when implanted in a good and honest heart (Lk 8:15), bears fruit. These new believers result in a growth of (multiplication in) the Body of Christ, in spite of (probably "because of") opposition and persecution.

2 Corinthians 9:10 Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and **increase** the harvest of your righteousness;

Hebrews 6:14-note saying, "I WILL SURELY BLESS YOU AND I WILL SURELY **MULTIPLY** YOU." (Quoting the Septuagint of Ge 22:17, compare this as a partial fulfillment of the prophetic promise in Ge 3:16)

NET Note: "in blessing I will bless you and in multiplying I will multiply you," the Greek form of a Hebrew idiom showing intensity.

1 Peter 1:2-note according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace **be** yours in the **fullest measure**.

2 Peter 1:2 Grace and peace **be multiplied** to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord;

Jude 1:2 May mercy and peace and love be **multiplied** to you.

Comment: Plethuno is used in the greetings in 2 Peter and Jude as prayers for "spiritual prosperity". **Multiplied** here in 2Peter 1:2 (and in Jude 1:2) is in the **optative mood** (optative of wish) which expresses a wish and in the NT almost always indicates a prayer ("may it be multiplied, conferred abundantly"). The **passive voice** indicates that the multiplication of the grace and peace comes from an outside source, clearly from God's throne of grace.

GRACE X PEACE = Spiritual Prosperity (Blessing)

Stop for a moment and ponder the glorious implication of infinite grace (2Cor 8:9) multiplied by infinite peace (Php 4:7note). The product surely includes eternal fullness of joy (Jn 15:11), abundant life (Jn 10:10) and an ever flowing river of "living water" (Jn 7:38).

J Vernon McGee adds that Peter

is a New Testament writer who uses arithmetic. He says, "**Grace and peace be multiplied**"—he is talking about multiplication. Paul didn't go into mathematics. He said that God is rich in **grace** and that the **peace** of God passes all understanding, but Simon Peter gets down to where the rubber meets the road. He takes out the multiplication table and says, "I hope grace and peace will be multiplied unto you." How wonderful this is." ([McGee, J V: Thru the Bible Commentary: Thomas Nelson](#)) ([Mp3](#))

Plethuno -153 times in the **Septuagint (LXX)**!

Ge 1:22, 28; 3:16; 6:5; 7:17f; 8:17; 9:1, 7; 16:10; 17:2, 20; 18:20; 22:17 (Quoted in Heb 6:14); Ge 26:4, 24; 28:3; 34:12; 35:11; 38:12; 47:27; 48:4, 16; Exod. 1:7, 10, 20; 7:3; 11:9; Lev. 25:16; 26:9; Num. 33:54; Deut. 1:10; 6:3; 7:13, 22; 8:13; 13:17; 17:16f; 28:11, 63; Jos. 24:3; Jdg. 9:29; 16:24; 1 Sam. 1:12; 7:2; 14:19; 25:10; 2 Sam. 14:11; 22:36; 1 Ki. 2:35; 3:14; 4:30; 2 Ki. 21:6; 1 Chr. 4:10, 38; 7:4; 8:40; 23:11; 27:23; 2 Chr. 33:6, 23; 36:14; Ezra 4:22; 9:6; 10:13; Neh. 9:23; Job 39:4; Ps. 3:1; 4:7; 16:4; 18:14; 25:19; 36:7; 38:19; 40:5, 12; 49:16; 65:9f, 13; 69:4; 78:38; 92:12, 14; 106:29; 107:38; 119:69; 139:18; 144:13; Prov. 4:10; 13:11; 28:8, 28; Eccl. 5:11; 6:11; 10:14; Isa. 1:15; 6:12; 14:2; 51:2; 57:9; Jer. 2:22; 3:16; 5:6; 15:8; 23:3; 29:6; 30:14, 16; 46:11, 23; Lam. 1:1; 2:5, 22; Ezek. 11:6; 16:7, 25, 29, 51; 19:2; 21:15; 22:25; 23:19; 24:10; 27:15; 28:5; 36:10f, 29f, 37; Dan. 4:1; 6:25; 11:39; 12:4; Hos. 2:8; 8:11, 14; 9:7; 10:1; 12:1, 10; Joel 3:13; Amos 4:4, 9; Nah. 3:16; Hab. 2:6; Zech. 10:8

Here are a few uses from the **Septuagint**...

Genesis 1:22 And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and **multiply**, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds **multiply** on the earth."

Genesis 1:28 And God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and **multiply**, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Genesis 3:16 To the woman He said, "I will greatly **multiply** Your pain in childbirth, In pain you shall bring forth children; Yet your desire shall be for your husband, And he shall rule over you."

Genesis 6:5 Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on (Lxx = were **multiplied**, cp **plethuno** in Mt 24:12) the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

It is interesting to note that **plethuno** is used in the **Septuagint (LXX)** (Greek of Hebrew OT) in Nebuchadnezzar's benediction, Daniel recording that

Nebuchadnezzar the king to all the peoples, nations, and men of every language that live in all the earth: **May your peace abound** (Greek reads "peace be multiplied [plethuno] to you!") (Da 4:1)

Peter used **plethuno** in his introduction of his first epistle writing to those who were...

(Chosen or elected) (on what basis were they chosen?) according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, (how was the "election" made a reality?) by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, (how do the elect now conduct themselves, which as an aside ensures them that they are indeed of the elect?) that you may obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: (And so Peter prays...) May grace and peace **be yours in fullest**

measure (plethuno). (1 Peter 1:2)

Luke explained that

the word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to **increase greatly** in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith. (Acts 6:7)

In spite of opposition and persecution the Lord sovereignly prospered the work of His church Luke explaining that

the word of the Lord (synonymous with the gospel) continued to grow and **to be multiplied** (Acts 12:24).

In recounting God's faithfulness to fulfill His promise to Abraham to judge the nation that enslaved His people and to bring His people out of bondage, **Stephen** explained that

as the time of the promise (cf Ge 15:14) was approaching which God had assured to Abraham, the people increased and **multiplied** in Egypt (Acts 7:17).

Similarly the **writer of Hebrews** reiterates God's promise to fulfill the Abrahamic Covenant in which He says (quoting from the **KJV** which more literally demonstrates the two uses of plethuno in this passage)...

Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and **multiplying** I will **multiply** thee. (He 6:14-note)

Paul uses **plethuno** to describe the "divine mathematics" of **giving back** to the Lord, writing that God

Who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food, will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. (2Cor 9:10)

Peter's prayer for bountiful blessings of **grace and peace** parallels many of Paul's similar prayers for the saints such as in his opening greeting

Grace to you and **peace** from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (2Th 1:2), later in the body of the same letter "Now may the Lord of **peace** Himself continually grant you **peace** in every circumstance. The Lord be with you all!" (2Th 3:16) and finally at the end of the letter praying "The **grace** of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all." (2Th 3:18)

We need His provision from beginning to end and then throughout eternity!

John Piper emphasizes the critical importance of **epignosis** in reminding us that "knowing God is the means by which his **grace** and **peace** become large and powerful in our lives. If you want to enjoy God's **peace** and be the aroma of his **grace** in the world, your **knowledge** of him has to grow. Grace is not a mere deposit. It is a power that leads to godliness and eternal life. And where knowledge of the glory and excellence of God languishes, grace does not flow. The channel from God's infinite reservoir of grace into and through our lives is knowledge of God. We do not study the Scripture for its own sake, but because through it comes the knowledge of God and through that, grace and peace are multiplied in your heart in the church and in the world. In the next two verses of our text Peter builds on this connection now between knowledge of God and the power of grace. (read or listen to Dr Piper's full message entitled [Liberating Promises](#))

How are grace and peace **multiplied**? As discussed above, Peter goes on to say that this "spiritual math" only takes place in the sphere of and by means of true, deep, full, rich, genuine knowledge. **Wuest's** paraphrase conveys the idea "Grace to you, and peace, be multiplied **in the sphere of and by the full knowledge of** our God, even Jesus, the Lord." ([Word Studies - Erdmans](#))

IN THE KNOWLEDGE: en epignosei:

- **the knowledge**: 2 Pe 3:18 Isa 53:11 Lu 10:22 Joh 17:3 2Co 4:6 1Jn 5:20,21
- [Journal Article - The Meaning of Epignosis - Robert E Picirelli](#)
- [2 Peter 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

In the knowledge - In the sphere or "atmosphere" of genuine, experiential knowledge which is based on the Word of truth, which is submitted to and obeyed.

Griffith-Thomas writes that "All spiritual grace comes from our personal knowledge and experience of God (see 2Pe 1:3). Those who "know their God" will be strong (Da 11:32; see also Job 22:21 and Jn 17:3).

Knowledge ([1922](#)) (**epignosis** from verb **epiginosko** [**word study**] from **epí** = upon + **ginosko** = to know) is a strengthened or

intensified form of "**gnosis [word study]**" and conveys the thought of a knowledge which is fuller, larger and more thorough. It also conveys the idea of a more intimate and personal relationship than the simple term **gnosis**.

W E Vine says the verb form **epiginosko** suggests generally a directive, a more special, recognition of the object known than **ginosko**.

Although the following passage uses the related verbs, it gives a good sense of the distinction between the simple (**gnosis**, **ginosko**) and the compound (**epignosis**, **epiginosko**) words. Paul writes "For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I **know** (**ginosko**) in part, but then I will **know fully** (**epiginosko**) just as I also have been **fully known** (**epiginosko**)." (1Cor 13:12+)

Epignosis - 20x in 20v - **NAS** = acknowledge*(1), knowledge(14), real knowledge(1), true knowledge(4).

Ro 1:28; 3:20; 10:2; Eph 1:17; 4:13; Phil 1:9; Col 1:9f; 2:2; 3:10; 1 Tim 2:4; 2Ti 2:25; 3:7; Titus 1:1; Philemon 1:6; Heb 10:26; 2Pet 1:2, 3, 8; 2Pe 2:20.

Epignosis - 5x in the **Septuagint** - 1Ki 7:2; Pr 2:5; Hos 4:1, Hos 4:6; Hos 6:6

Epignosis is a full, more exact and thorough **knowledge** and is clearly a **key word** in this epistle (2Pe 1:2, 2Pe 1:3, 2Pe 1:8, 2Pe 2:20).

In fairness it should be stated that there are a few resources that suggest there is very little difference between **gnosis** and **epignosis**. This discussion holds the opinion that **epignosis** does have subtle but real differences.

Epignosis refers to exact, complete, thorough, accurate, experiential knowledge, not just abstract, intellectual, head knowledge of God or even facts about Him. **Epignosis** always describes moral and religious knowledge in the NT and especially refers to full and comprehensive knowledge of God's will that rests on the knowledge of God and of Christ found today in His Word.

Vincent: (Epignosis) signifies advanced or full knowledge. The difference between the simple **gnosis** and the compound word is illustrated in Ro 1:21, 28, and 1 Cor. 13:12....(Epignosis is) Clear and exact knowledge. Always of a knowledge which powerfully influences the form of the religious life, and hence containing more of the element of personal sympathy than the simple **gnosis** knowledge, which may be concerned with the intellect alone without affecting the character. See Ro 1:28; 10:2; Ep 4:13. Also Phil 1:9, where it is associated with the abounding of love; Col. 3:10; Philemon 1:6, etc. Hence the knowledge of sin here (Ro 3:20) is not mere perception, but an acquaintance with sin which works toward repentance, faith, and holy character.

Alford quotes Delitzsch as saying: "When **epignosis** is used, there is the assumption of an actual direction of the spirit to a definite object and of a real grasping of the same: so that we may speak of a false **gnósis**, but not of a false **epignosis**. And the Writer (of Hebrews - referring to He 10:26-note) "For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the **knowledge** (**epignosis**) of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins", by the use of this word, gives us to understand that he means by it not only a shallow historical notion about the Truth, but a living believing knowledge of it, which has laid hold of a man and fused him into union with itself." Thus it is clear that the Jew who committed this sin, was fully informed by the Holy Spirit of the issues involved between the First Testament and the New Testament, and also of the meaning and the implications of the New Testament, (He 6:4-note, "who were once enlightened") and therefore, he sinned with his eyes wide open." (Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament)

Wuest commenting on 2 Peter 1:2 writes that "Knowledge" or **epignosis** is full, perfect, precise knowledge as opposed to **gnósis**, imperfect, partial knowledge. Strachan says: "**epignōsis**, 'involving the complete appropriation of all truth and the unreserved acquiescence in God's will, is the goal and crown of the believer's course' (Lightfoot) ... **epignosis** implies a more intimate and personal relationship than **gnósis**. It would be a useful word, seeing that **gnósis** had become associated with Gnosticism, then incipient in the Church.... Grace and peace are multiplied in and through this more intimate heart knowledge of Jesus Christ, in contrast to a mere barren **gnósis**. ""Knowledge" is locative of sphere and instrumental of means. This grace and peace are in the sphere of this knowledge and are produced by it. The particular word for "knowledge" here, **epignosis**, speaks of experiential knowledge, that is, knowledge gained by experience. This knowledge of the Lord Jesus possessed by the believer therefore, is not a mere intellectual knowledge of the facts concerning Him acquired by a study of the Gospels, for instance, but a heart experience of what and who He is gained by such a study plus a personal association with Him by means of the Word and the ministry of the Holy Spirit. It is a person with Person knowledge through intimate fellowship." ([Word Studies - Eerdmans](#))

Related Resource:

- See study of meaning and significance of locative of sphere

It is interesting to note that 8 of the 21 uses of **epignosis** occur in Colossians (where Paul counters persuasive arguments Col 2:4-note) and in Second Peter (where Peter counters false teachers). Some of these uses are noted in the following discussion.

Another interesting use of **epignosis** by Paul is as integral component of four prayers for the saints, all four epistles written in his captivity!

1) For example in Philemon we read

"I pray that the fellowship of your faith may become effective through the **knowledge** (epignosis) of every good thing which is in you for Christ's sake." (Philemon 1:6).

John MacArthur has an excellent summary on the significance of **epignosis** in Paul's prayer for Philemon writing that **epignosis** "refers to deep, rich, full, experiential knowledge. It is the knowledge that comes through personal acquaintance with the truth. Philemon could read of forgiveness, or hear a sermon about it. But until he forgave, he could have no experiential knowledge of it. By forgiving Onesimus, Philemon would experience that good thing in him known as forgiveness. By walking in obedience to God's will, believers experience the good things God has placed within them. There is a vast difference between reading a book on skiing and actually skiing. There is a certain flat, one-dimensional knowledge to be gained from a book, but it cannot compare to experiencing the exhilaration of a downhill run. The same thing is true in the spiritual realm. It is thrilling to grasp a truth from Scripture intellectually. But it is far more exciting to live that truth out in practice. Practicing the truths of Scripture leads to the **epignosis** that brings spiritual maturity (Ep 4:12,13-see note Eph 4:12; 4:13). It is wonderful to understand what it means to trust God, but more wonderful to experience His power in the times when we trusted Him with no strength of our own." (MacArthur, J. Philemon. page 210. Chicago: Moody Press)

2) Writing to the saints at Philippi Paul said

And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in **real knowledge** (epignosis) and all discernment, so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ" (Php 1:9, 10-note)

3) Paul prayed for the saints at Ephesus

"that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the **knowledge** (epignosis) of Him" (Ep 1:17-note)

4) And finally as he recalled the Colossian saint's love in the Spirit, he wrote

"For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the **knowledge** (epignosis) of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the **knowledge** (epignosis) of God." (Col 1:9-note, Col 1:10-note)

Trench - Of **epignosis**, as compared with **gnosis**, it will be sufficient to say that **epí** must be regarded as intensive, giving to the compound word a greater strength than the simple possessed." He goes on to explain that "Paul, it will be remembered, exchanges the **ginosko**, which expresses his present and fragmentary knowledge, for **epignosomai** when he would express his future intuitive and perfect knowledge (1Co 13:12 "For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I **know** (ginosko) in part, but then I **shall know fully** (epignosko) just as I also **have been fully known** (epignosko). Trench explains that the idea in **epignosis** is that "It is bringing me better acquainted with a thing I knew before; a more exact viewing of an object that I saw before afar off. That little portion of knowledge which we had here shall be much improved, our eye shall be raised to see the same things more strongly and clearly.' All the uses of **epignosis** which St. Paul makes, justify and bear out this distinction (Ro 1:28, 3:20, 10:2, Ep 4:13, Php 1:9, 1Ti 2:4, 2Ti 2:25, He 10:26 see notes Ro 1:28; 3:20; 10:2; Ep 4:13; Php 1:9; 2Ti 2:25; cf. Heb10:26); this same intensive use of **epignosis** is borne out by other similar passages in the NT (2Pe 1:2, 8; 2:20) and in the Septuagint (Pr 2:5; Hos. 4:1; 6:6); and is recognized by the Greek Fathers." (Trench, R. C. Synonyms of the New Testament. page 285)

Marvin Vincent says **epignosis** - Clear and exact knowledge. Always of a knowledge which powerfully influences the form of the religious life and hence containing more of the element of personal sympathy than the simple **gnósis** knowledge, which may be concerned with the intellect alone without affecting the character." Vincent goes on to comment on Paul's use of **epignosis** in Romans 3:20-note ("...by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the **knowledge** of sin.") noting that "the knowledge of sin here (Ro 3:20) is not mere perception, but an acquaintance with sin which works toward repentance, faith, and holy character." (Vincent, M. R. Word studies in the New Testament. Vol. 3, Page 1-40)

William Barclay - Epignosis can be interpreted in two directions. **(a)** It can mean increasing knowledge. Gnosis, the normal Greek word for knowledge, is here preceded by the preposition **epi** (1909) which means towards, in the direction of. **Epignosis** then could be interpreted as knowledge which is always moving further in the direction of that which it seeks to know. Grace and peace are multiplied to the Christian as he comes to know Jesus Christ better and better. As it has been put: "The more Christians realize the meaning of Jesus Christ, the more they realize the meaning of grace and the experience of peace." **(b) Epignosis** has a second

meaning. Often in Greek it means full knowledge. Plutarch, for instance, uses it of the scientific knowledge of music as opposed to the knowledge of the mere amateur. So it may be that the implication here is that knowledge of Jesus Christ is what we might call "the master-science of life." The other sciences may bring new skill, new knowledge, new abilities, but the master-science, the knowledge of Jesus Christ, alone brings the grace men need and the peace for which their hearts crave ([2 Peter 1 - William Barclay's Daily Study Bible Commentary](#))

Bishop Lightfoot commenting on the use of *epignosis* in (see note Philippians 1:9) writes that *epignosis* is an "advanced, perfect knowledge." (J. B. Lightfoot, bishop of Durham: Saint Paul's Epistle to the Philippians. page 86. London: Macmillan 1913)

In his commentary on Colossians **Lightfoot** has the following discussion on *epignosis* noting that it is "A favourite word in the later epistles of St Paul.... In all the four epistles of the first Roman captivity it is an element in the Apostle's opening prayer for his correspondents' well-being ("And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real **knowledge** and all discernment," Phil 1:9-note; "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the **knowledge** of Him" in Ep 1:17 (note), "I pray that the fellowship of your faith may become effective through the **knowledge** of every good thing which is in you for Christ's sake." Philemon 1:6)...The compound **epignosis** is an advance upon **gnósis**, denoting a larger and more thorough knowledge...So too St Paul himself contrasts ginoskein, gnosis, with epiginoskein, epignosis, **as the partial with the complete**, in (Ro 1:21 [note] where Paul uses ginosko > "for even though they **knew** (ginosko) God..." versus Ro 1:28 (note) where Paul uses epignosis > "since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the **knowledge** (epignosis) of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done." NIV)... Hence also **epignosis** is used especially of the knowledge of God and of Christ, as being the perfection of knowledge." ([Bolding added. Page 203- Lightfoot, J. B. Saint Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon 1886](#))

Vincent says that Paul's use of **epignosis** in Ro 1:28-note indicates that the reprobates

"did not suffer the rudimentary revelation of nature (cf "creation" Ro 1:20[note]) to develop into full knowledge — "a penetrating and living knowledge of God" (Meyer)." (Word studies in the New Testament. Vol. 3, Page 1-21).

In Romans **Paul** writes

"Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with **knowledge** (epignosis)." (Ro 10:1,2- note)

In other words the Jew's zeal for God was not conditioned nor characterized by a complete, vital, correct, experiential **knowledge** but by a partial, insufficient knowledge (which was no fault of God Who gave them written revelation), which because of its insufficiency led them astray as to how they could be saved.

In his letter to the Colossians Paul prayed

"and to ask that (the Colossian saints) may be filled with the **knowledge** (epignosis) of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding." (Col 1:9-note)

Paul was not praying for an inner impression, an abstract intellectualism, an occult experience or a feeling, but a deep and thorough knowledge of the will of God that is finally and completely revealed in the Word of God. Paul desired that the Colossians be totally controlled by this deep, precise and thorough knowledge of God.

Wuest adds that **gnósis** "was a favorite word of the Gnostics who used it to designate the superior knowledge which they claimed as their exclusive possession. Paul prays that all the saints might become possessors of epignosis, indicating that it was open for all to appropriate, not a secret mystery into which only a favored few could be initiated. If the Gnostics had their superior knowledge, so did the Christian Church. The former was speculative and false, the latter, positive and true." ([Wuest, K. S. Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: Eerdmans](#))

Paul uses **epignosis** 4 times in the Pastoral epistles. For example in his first epistle to Timothy Paul wrote that God our Savior

"desires all men to be saved and to come to the (full, thorough) **knowledge** (epignosis) of the truth." (1 Ti 2:4)

In this context epignosis is essentially synonymous with salvation. Paul conveys a similar meaning in Second Timothy writing that the Lord's bond-servant must correct

"with gentleness... those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the **knowledge** (epignosis) of the truth," (2Ti 2:25-note)

Comment: The Amplified Version emphasizes the full and complete knowledge adding that "that they will perceive and recognize and become accurately acquainted with and acknowledge" the truth.

In the opening verse of Titus we read

Paul, a bond-servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness." (Titus 1:1-note)

NIV is better here "the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness". **Epígnosis**, a deep, experiential, accurate and intimate knowledge of Truth should always reflect itself in godly conduct.

The OT use of **epignosis** in Proverbs is worth noting: Solomon in the context of "Wisdom" instructs us

"My son, if you will receive my sayings, and treasure my commandments within you, make your ear attentive to wisdom, incline your heart to understanding; for if you cry for discernment (passionate pleading of one desperate to know the truth of God with idea that the an indifferent approach will leave one bereft of fullness of wisdom), lift your voice for understanding; if you seek her as silver (describes a desiring intensive attitude like men do for material riches) and search for her as for hidden treasures, then you will discern the fear of the Lord, and discover the (true, full, genuine) **knowledge (epignosis)** of God." ([Pr 2:1-5](#))

Warren Wiersbe has a poignant comment on this proverb noting that "Obtaining spiritual wisdom isn't a once-a-week hobby, it is the daily discipline of a lifetime. But in this age of microwave ovens, fast foods, digests, and numerous "made easy" books, many people are out of the habit of daily investing time and energy in digging deep into Scripture and learning wisdom from the Lord. Thanks to television, their attention span is brief; thanks to religious entertainment that passes for worship, their spiritual appetite is feeble and **spiritual knowledge** isn't "pleasant to [their] soul" (Pr 2:10). It's no wonder fewer and fewer people "take time to be holy" and more and more people fall prey to the enemies that lurk along the way." (Wiersbe, W. W. Be Skillful. An Old Testament study [on Proverbs]. Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books)

The respected Lutheran commentator **Lenski** observes

The aim of this letter is to increase this knowledge in the hearts of the readers so that, when grace and peace are multiplied, they may abound in all godliness and be fully fortified against all libertinists and libertinism when this sort of ting arises to harass them.

Wuest commenting on (Php 1:9-note) says that **epignosis** "is from the Greek word speaking of knowledge gained by experience, as contrasted to intuitive knowledge, which is from another word (eido, [1492](#)). A prefixed preposition (epi-) intensifies the word, and we have "full knowledge." The full knowledge which these Philippians needed to gain by experience was a better understanding of God's Word as translated into their experience, and a clearer vision of the Lord Jesus in all the beauty and fragrance of His Person." A Christian can have an "understanding" knowledge of the Word, that is, be able to explain its meaning to others, without having an experiential knowledge of the same. But when that Christian has put the Word of God into practice in his life, then he has what Paul is talking about here (**Ed note**: the full, true experiential knowledge of which epignosis speaks). This is the difference between a young convert and a matured believer. The former has not had time to live long enough to live out the Word in his life, the latter has. The former, if his life is wholly yielded, is a delight to look upon in his Christian life, as one would enjoy the vigor and sparkle of youth. The latter, in his mellowed, well-rounded, matured, and fully-developed Christian experience, his life full of tender reminiscences of his years of companionship with the Lord Jesus, has the fragrance of heavenly things about him. This was what the Philippian saints needed, but it would take time for this to be brought about." ([Word Studies - Eerdmans](#))(Compare Wuest's comments with those below by Dr. Wayne Barber)

In the knowledge is locative of sphere and instrumental of means. In plain English, the means of the experiencing of this increase in grace and peace are **in** the sphere of this knowledge ("locative of sphere") and are produced **by** it (knowledge is the "instrument" by means of which we enable to grow in grace).

[Dr. Wayne Barber](#) offers the following insights on the attaining and application of **gnósis** and **epignosis**...

1) **GNOSIS or EPIGNOSIS** causes a person to have **SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT**. If you're growing as a Christian, you should be increasing in discernment (He 5:14-note, 1Pe 2:2-note) How do you know whether you are hearing from God or from man? If you don't have spiritual discernment, "look out" because "[every wind of doctrine](#)" (Ep 4:11, 12, 13, 14, 15-see notes Ep 4:11; 4:12; 4:13; 4:14; 4:15; 4:16) will blow you. You cannot have spiritual discernment apart from spiritual knowledge.

2) **GNOSIS or EPIGNOSIS** is **PERSONAL** knowledge. You have to acquire this knowledge **for yourself**. Compare Acts 20:32 "And [now](#) I commend **YOU** (not your brother...not your sister...but YOU) to [God](#) and to the [word](#) of His [grace](#), which is [able](#) to [build](#) you up and to [give](#) you the [inheritance among all those](#) who are [sanctified](#)."

3) GNOSIS & EPIGNOSIS is the final product of the parallel verbs *ginosko* & *epiginosko* which are used three times in 2 Peter (2Pe 1:20, 2:20, 3:3-see notes 2Pe 1:20, 2:20, 3:3) which describe the act of acquiring knowledge. There is a process in getting this knowledge and the "process" involves primarily being obedient (cf Jn 7:17) to the Word of God. As I obey, I learn more truth. We all want gnosis or spiritual knowledge, but we don't want the *ginosko*--that is to say we don't want to go through the effort. Or stated another way we are not willing to obey what we know intellectually in order that this knowledge might become "heart" knowledge and not just "head" *gnosis*. If you don't want the *ginosko*, you won't get the *gnosis*! You get the *gnosis* by obeying the Lord Jesus Christ, by being totally "sold out" to Him.

There are 2 varieties of GNOSIS, one from MAN & the other from GOD.

1) Humanistic gnosis or Gnosticism - Gnostics claimed one could find knowledge apart from God. Gnosticism allowed the people to go to church, to not feel bad about sin and to not even have to obey and yet still be called "religious" (2Ti 3:5-note, Titus 1:16-note)

2) Spiritual Gnosis - comes from Knowledge of & Experiencing of Christ through obedience to His Word as discussed above and as taught specifically by Jesus in [Jn 7:17] where He taught that "[if anyone](#) is [willing](#) to [do](#) (obey) His [will](#), he will [know](#) (*ginosko*) of the [teaching](#), [whether](#) it is of [God or](#) whether I [speak](#) from [Myself](#)."

In **Dr Barber's** sermon series on Ephesians he says

"The word for "**knowledge**" is the word *epignosis*, which means more than just fact. He's already given them facts. He says, "Now I want something deeper for you. I want you to know God. I want you to have a deeper understanding of God." That word *epignosis* means "the fullness of knowledge." It means to not only know it but to understand it and literally, if you please, to experience God. In other words, it means to be drawn into God Himself and not just the facts about Him....Look at the second thing it says (commenting on Col 1:10-note "*increasing in the knowledge of God*"). (The verb "*increasing*" is a present passive participle. I'm not doing it, God's doing it. It says, you start (to do) what? (You start) "*increasing in the knowledge (*epignosis*) of God*"

How am I going to get this knowledge (*epignosis*) of God? You don't get it by your own personal pursuit. You get it as you bow before Him, cooperating with Him and surrendering to what His word says. The Holy Spirit of God imparts wisdom by revealing it to you as He wills and in His own time and in His own way. It's by revelation. Man cannot discover on his own what God has hidden. What God has hidden only God can reveal. Man can discover what is hidden by man, but man cannot discover what is hidden by God. To me this is one of the real root thoughts of Paul's prayer. He's leading them to a deeper understanding of God, but he's trying to show them that it doesn't come by their own intellect. It comes by the revelation of the Spirit of God. Yes, the intellect is needed because God gives understanding, but it's the Holy Spirit doing it in a person's life." (**click** full sermon text)

Wuest also discussing *epignosis* adds that "This knowledge of the Lord Jesus possessed by the believer therefore, is not a mere intellectual knowledge of the facts concerning Him acquired by a study of the Gospels, for instance, but a heart experience of what and who He is gained by such a study plus a personal association with Him by means of the Word and the ministry of the Holy Spirit. It is a person with Person knowledge through intimate fellowship." ([Word Studies - Eerdmans](#))

W E Vine in his *Collected Writings* has an excellent summary of **epignosis** elaborating on its use in (Phil 1:9) where Paul writes "And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real **knowledge** (*epignosis*) and all discernment." ([Collected writings of W. E. Vine.](#))

Vine says that if the Philippian saint's...

"love were to increase, its outgoings were to be directed and controlled. Love is not impulsive, as though it were a mere emotion; love is intelligent, and therefore seeks that **full and accurate knowledge** which enables it to bestow itself worthily... **Epígnosis**, like the simpler form, **gnósis**, is always acquired or experimental knowledge.

Gnósis is knowledge, true or false, (as used in) 1Timothy 6:20 (O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you, avoiding worldly and empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called "knowledge" (*gnósis*)—21 which some have professed and thus gone astray from the faith. Grace be with you."). **Epígnosis** is always true knowledge; it may be either full knowledge or increasing knowledge, but it is always knowledge in the spiritual sphere. God's knowledge, mentioned but twice in the New Testament, Ro 11:33 (note) and Col 2:3 (note), is **gnósis**, not **epígnosis**, for there are no gradations in it, it is absolute. Cp. Psalm 139:6.

While in the Fall man lost the knowledge of God, he did not lose it completely. Though what he retained gradually diminished, yet it has never entirely left him; hence Paul says “as they refused to have God in [full] knowledge, God gave them up to a reprobate mind,” Ro 1:28 (note). Cp. [Hosea 4:6](#) (in the Septuagint, LXX, Greek of the Hebrew OT), “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge [gnósis]: because thou hast rejected [full knowledge] [epignosis], I will also reject thee.” Later he states that “through the application of the law [to oneself] comes the [full] knowledge [epignosis] of sin,” Ro 3:20 (note).

Later still, speaking of the Jews, he recognized that “they had a zeal for God, but not according to [full] knowledge [epignosis],” Ro 10:2-note; such knowledge as they possessed had **not increased** so as to become fully mature; hence it was inadequate to direct their zeal into the way of true service to Him. All he could credit them with was “the form of knowledge,” gnósis, Ro 2:20 (note) (“a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of the immature, having in the Law the embodiment (morphosis = outward shape and appearance) of knowledge [gnósis] and of the truth”).

In a letter written to a church in which a false knowledge (Gnosticism) threatened the simplicity of the gospel, the apostle prays that the believers “may be filled with the [full] knowledge of [God’s] will, and of God Himself” (Col 1:9, 10-see notes Cols 1:9; 1:10), and of “the mystery of God, even Christ” (“that they may know” is, lit., “unto knowledge”), Col 2:2-note; and this because he knows that they had “put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge [epignosis] according to the image of the One who created him” (Col 3:10-note).

For the Ephesian believers he prays that God may give to them “a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge [epignosis] of” God, Ep 1:17 (note), for it is the gracious purpose of God to bring all those who put their trust in Him to the full knowledge of the Son of God, who is the Revealer of God, Ep 4:13 (note) (“until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge [epignosis] of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ”).

Since the idea of growth or increase is involved in each of these passages, **epignosis** is used in each, as it is also in Titus 1:1 (note). It is the will of God our Savior “that all men should ... come to the [full] knowledge [epignosis] of the truth,” 1Ti 2:4.

Some there are, however, who, “ever learning,” are “never able to come to the [full] knowledge [epignosis] of the truth,” with the result that they know but little, and that little is confusion, and not coordinated with the completed revelation of God, 2Ti 3:7 (Note). For some such, happily, there is hope of recovery “out of the snare of the devil,” “if peradventure God may give them repentance unto the [full] knowledge [epignosis] of the truth,” (2Ti 2:25, 26-note). In each case again **epignosis** is found, with evident appropriateness. The character of Christ, which is the fruit of the Spirit in the believer, Galatians 5:22-note, is also to be the object of [an increasing] knowledge (epignosis); that is, the Christian is to be exercised that he may discern more and more of Christ in others, that thus all may together be encouraged to grow in likeness to Him, Philemon 1:6.

Epignosis is used in the same way in Hebrews 10:26-note; “if we sin willfully after that we have received the [full] knowledge [epignosis] of the truth.” By the truth, God Who is not an unreasonable or hard taskmaster, has provided against sins that may be due to defective knowledge. Peter also desires for those to whom he writes “the [increasing] knowledge [epignosis] of our Lord Jesus Christ.” And later he warns them, in effect, that escape from “the defilements of the world” is “through the [increasing] knowledge [epignosis] of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,”... (2Pe 1:2, 3, 8-see **notes** 2Pe 1:2; 1:3; 1:8). Thus, as the apostle shows in (Php 1:9-note), the knowledge [epignosis] of God regulates the heart’s affections, directing them away from what is evil and guiding them in the ways of righteousness.” ([Vine, W. Collected writings of W. E. Vine. Nashville: Thomas Nelson](#))

Below are all 20 NT uses of **epignosis** for review (Note that epignosis is primarily a Pauline word)...

Romans 1:28 (note) And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer (to retain God in their knowledge = epignosis), God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper,

Romans 3:20 (note) because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the **knowledge** of sin.

Romans 10:2 (note) For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with **knowledge**.

Ephesians 1:17 (note) that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the **knowledge** of Him.

Ephesians 4:13 (note) until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the **knowledge** of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ.

Philippians 1:9 (note) And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in **real knowledge** and all discernment,

Colossians 1:9 (note) For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the **knowledge** of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,

Colossians 1:10 (note) so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the **knowledge** of God;

Colossians 2:2 (note) that their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love, and attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a **true knowledge** of God's mystery, that is, Christ Himself,

Colossians 3:10 (note) and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a **true knowledge** according to the image of the One who created him

1 Timothy 2:4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

2 Timothy 2:25 (note) with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the **knowledge** of the truth,

2 Timothy 3:7 (note) always learning and never able to come to the **knowledge** of the truth.

Titus 1:1 (note) Paul, a bond-servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God and the **knowledge** of the truth which is according to godliness,

Philemon 1:6 and I pray that the fellowship of your faith may become effective through the **knowledge** of every good thing which is in you for Christ's sake.

Hebrews 10:26 (note) For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the **knowledge** of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,

2 Peter 1:2 (note) Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the **knowledge** of God and of Jesus our Lord;

2 Peter 1:3 (note) seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the **true knowledge** of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

2 Peter 1:8 (note) For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the **true knowledge** of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Peter 2:20 (note) For if after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the **knowledge** of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first.

OF GOD AND OF JESUS OUR LORD: tou theou kai iesou tou kuriou hemon

- [2 Peter 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

JESUS IS LORD

Jesus our Lord - this exact phrase elsewhere only in Ro 4:24 - note).

Genuine spiritual growth comes only from genuine, "pure milk", here referred to as epignosis of **God and Jesus our Lord**.

Note the order is **God** which suggests that in order to grow in the knowledge of Him we need to study the Old Testament for this is where the attributes of God are taught in greatest detail (see Attributes of God Chart on this site). Then Peter says "**and Jesus our Lord**" Who is most clearly revealed in the NT.

Christianity is not a mystical or "mysterious" religion, but is based in objective, historical, revealed, rational truth from God and intended to be understood and believed. The deeper and wider that knowledge of the Lord, the more "grace and peace" are multiplied.

Here Peter defines the specific Objects of this more exact **knowledge**. "**God**" (**theos**) with the definite article pointing to the one Living and True God the readers had come to know personally through the gospel. Jesus taught

"This is eternal life, that they may **know** (ginosko, verb related to epignosis) Thee, the only true God, & Jesus Christ whom You have sent." ([Jn 17:3](#)).

Lord ([2962](#)) (**kurios**) signifies sovereign power and absolute authority. The primary meaning relates to possession of power or authority. It is the one who has absolute ownership and uncontested power. It is the one who is in charge by virtue of possession (owner).

Lord is a favorite term of Peter for **Jesus**, and is found 14x in this epistle (2Pe 1:2, 8, 11, 14, 16; 2:9, 11, 20; 3:2, 8, 9, 10, 15, 18) and 8x in 1 Peter (1Pe 1:3, 25; 2:3, 13; 3:6, 15 - twice in 1Pe 3:12).

Remember the idea conveyed by **kurios** describes a Person (The Lord Jesus Christ) to Whom another person (in this case Peter) belongs and over which power/control is exercised.

Kurios thus amplifies the truth brought out in the word "**doulos**" (bond servant) in v1. In defining Jesus as our Lord and Master, the readers would also be prompted toward a willingness and readiness to observe the exhortations that follow.

Real Wisdom - An early evening thunderstorm provided the setting for the most beautiful rainbow I'd ever seen. But when I tried to describe it to my wife, I became thoroughly frustrated, for its beauty defied my words. In an attempt to understand what I had observed, I read an article in the encyclopedia. It explained that a rainbow is an arc showing the colors of the spectrum, which is a display of light separated according to wavelengths. Each wavelength consists of a different color. There-fore the rainbow appears as a band of colors. The article increased my understanding, but it offered only cold facts. It didn't capture the rainbow's glory. Abstract knowledge adds to my intellectual under-standing, but only seeing its beauty can reach my emotions.

Second Peter 1 mentions two different kinds of knowledge. In 2Pe 1:5, 6, the author used a Greek word for knowledge that means the abstract information needed for spiritual growth. But in 2Pe 1:2, 3, 8, he used the Greek word (epignosis [word study]) that denotes a more complete, practical knowledge of Christ, which is actually the goal of such growth. These two terms differ in the same way that reading about a rainbow differs from seeing its beauty. Job spoke of that distinction after his testing when he said to the Lord, "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You" (Job 42:5). As you increase your knowledge about God, pray that you may also grow in your knowledge of God. —M. R. De Haan II ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

**True wisdom starts with a heart full of faith,
not a head full of facts.
(1Co 8:1, Ro 14:19)**