

# ***2nd Peter***

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# *2<sup>nd</sup> Peter*

## *Introduction*

- 1) The author of this letter is the apostle Peter. The place written as well as the date of this writing is unknown. Commentators suppose it was written between 65 and 68 A.D.
- 2) The recipients of this letter were probably a group of churches in Asia Minor to whom he had also addressed his first letter. (2 Peter 3:1; 1 Peter 1:1)
- 3) Peter's first letter to them was an exhortation to live their faith openly even in the face of persecution. In this letter his main focus is to reaffirm the truth of the gospel against an onslaught of error and false teaching.
- 4) Peter desires to leave them with a written record of the truth as well as a warning to them, knowing that he will soon die. He perceives the intellectual attack against the gospel and the false teachers as being a much greater threat to them than physical persecution.
- 5) In this letter he refers to the writings of the apostle Paul who also wrote to many churches in Asia Minor. In doing so, Peter affirms the truth of Paul's writings and joins with him as one commissioned to lay down the foundational doctrines of the church of Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 3:15-16)



***v.1:1 Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:***

The author identifies himself as Simon Peter. Simon is his proper name, while Peter is the name given to him by Jesus Christ at their first meeting. (John 1:42)

- a) Peter first refers to himself as a servant, the word used refers to the lowest of servants or a slave. Peter knows he was purchased by the blood of Christ and so belongs to Him. (1 Peter 1:18-19)
- b) However, Christ had chosen him and bestowed upon him the office of apostle. He was commissioned by Jesus Christ to be one of the men who would lay the foundation of the church and so writes with the full apostolic authority.
- c) Peter addresses his readers not as those of a specific city or region, but as fellow believers, that is, those who had obtained like faith or who shared in the same faith along with himself.
- d) This common belief or trust in God was obtained, or better still, given to them by God. Kistemaker in his commentary explains that the word translated “obtained” means “something someone obtains by the will of God.”
- e) And so it is precious, a faith given to them by which they are saved and linked together into one body with the Savior as their Head. It is a faith not born in their own righteousness, but in the righteousness of God which was manifested to them and applied to their account by Jesus Christ their Lord.

***v.1:2 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,***

Peter prays that grace and peace will be multiplied or will be abundant in their lives. Grace is the unmerited favor of God that incorporates his great mercy and love. Peace is the result of grace. He wishes them to be at peace with God, with themselves and with others.

- a) Such grace and peace is the result of their acknowledgement of God and of Jesus Christ. It constitutes both a belief and acceptance of Him according to the truth of the gospel message that proclaims Him to be Savior and Lord.

*“Here Peter writes the noun in compound form to express acknowledgement. He conveys the thought that knowledge is not merely an ability to recite facts but an experience that promotes fellowship. The believer who is the recipient of God’s grace and peace experiences these gifts through intimate fellowship with God.” Kistemaker.*

***v.1:3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that [pertain] unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:***

Peter informs his readers that they, as those who “have obtained like precious faith,” were the recipients of an infinite supply of what can be called spiritual wealth. He opens, as he did in his first letter, reminding them of their position in Christ and the inexhaustible graces and helps at their disposal. (1 Peter 1:2-5)

- a) In accordance with the divine power of God they have been given or have been gifted with everything that has to do with life and godliness. Life pertains to spiritual life and godliness its manifestation. Life refers to their position in Christ while godliness is their outward behavior that must conform to their position.
- b) This bringing their behavior into harmony with their position is what is here spoken of. They have been spiritually equipped as to life and godliness. They have, by divine power, the capacity to live godly lives. They are completely enabled in His power.
- c) The believer possesses these things through the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ. Again implied is that knowledge is accompanied by acceptance. Life is synonymous with a knowledge of Christ. (John 17:3)
- d) Jesus Christ enables the believer and calls them to follow Him, thus sharing in His glory and virtue which is His excellence.

***v.1:4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.***

Peter adds, that by the divine power of God and through their acknowledgement of Him, they are the recipients of great and precious promises.

- a) The word translated “given” in these two verses means “to bestow or to endow.” Implied is the worth of the thing given, so with the addition of the words “great” and “precious” the promises Peter speaks of are of inestimable value.
- b) These promises, although not here specified, are the promises of the gospel message that include redemption, regeneration, sanctification, sonship and the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit by whom we become partakers in the divine nature.
- c) The Holy Spirit is but the believers down payment until the fullness of the inheritance is made known. (Eph. 1:13-14) Through the promises of the gospel on which they had believed they were conformed to the image of Christ, not yet in totality, but in part. (1 John 3:1-2) Nevertheless, they are indeed partakers or sharers in His work and of His glory being identified with Him in His death and resurrection. (Gal. 2:20)
- d) In Christ and through the promises they are new creatures, set free from the sin in the world that is born in the evil desires of the fallen nature. They can put off the old man and put on the new being citizens of heaven. (Eph. 4:22-24)

***v.1:5 And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;***

For this very reason or as a consequence of the things stated above, they are to make every effort to live their lives within the realm of these truths manifesting them in their lives. As Matthew Henry put it, “*The apostle comes to the chief thing intended in this epistle – to excite and engage them to advance in grace and holiness ...*”

- a) The word “diligence” means “to put forth work and effort,” but also incorporates the idea of approaching the task with great zeal and excitement. To advance in grace and holiness is their responsibility, and their diligence in this pursuit is to be evident.
- b) They are to have an active working faith, not faith that is passive or even dormant. As Paul put it, they are to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling. (Phil. 2:12) Peter not only wants them to understand the power and grace available to them, but to tap into it, to use it, and to grow in it.

The word translated “add” is the Greek word from which we get such words as “chorus” and “choreography,” so the picture Peter paints is that of voices being added to a choir or steps being added to a dance. In this manner should the virtues he names in the next several verses be “added to” faith, and so, beautifully supporting it and enhancing it.

- c) So Peter lists several virtues that they can cultivate in their lives as believers. The list is by no means all inclusive, but he simply provides for them a plan or a path they can take in their quest to advance in grace and holiness.
- d) Most commentators feel that there is little or no significance in the order of the virtues listed. In accordance with the definition of the word “add” as stated above all of the virtues are to blend and support each other in such a way that they are equally important.

*“The design of the apostle is to say, in an emphatic manner, that we are to strive to possess and exhibit all these virtues; in other words, we are not to content ourselves with a single grace, but are to cultivate all the virtues, and to endeavour to make our piety complete in all the relations which we sustain.”* Albert Barnes

- e) To their faith they are to add virtue. Seeing all of the things mentioned are in themselves virtues, the word must here mean or refer to strength and courage. They must stand up for their faith, living it and cultivating it even in the midst of persecution. They must be bold in their faith.
- f) They are ever to add knowledge of God; of His attributes and His ways through the scriptures, through experience, and through their fellow believers. Paul prayed many times that the recipients of his letters would increase in the knowledge of God. (Eph. 3:17-19)

***v.1:6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;***

Another “addition” to the chorus of faith is temperance, which is self-control. The believer is to practice discipline in his life. It is not to let their passions and emotions “get the better of them.”

- a) The Greek word was used in referring to an athlete in training. He would abstain from certain foods and activities that would interfere with a greater goal that he had set for himself. In the same way, the believer should willingly abstain from or temper whatever may hinder him in his pursuit of truth and holiness. (Prov. 16:32; 1 Cor. 9:25)

*“A proper and limited use of all earthly enjoyments, keeping every sense under proper restraints, and never permitting the animal part to subjugate the rational.” Adam Clarke*

- b) Patience is perseverance. It is continuing in the faith and in all its supporting virtues through all trials and persecutions. It involves waiting on God; trusting Him in all circumstances. It is endurance, the determining in the mind not to give in.
- c) Godliness is holiness. It is being motivated by a reverence for God, so that all of our thoughts and actions are in conformity with His word. As stated earlier, it is the believer manifesting his position in Christ in his daily life.

***v.1:7 And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.***

Where as the five “additions” to faith mentioned above have to do mainly with our relationship to God, the final two, mentioned in this verse, have to do mainly with our relationship with our brothers in Christ and by extension to our relationships with all men in general.

- a) Brotherly kindness refers to the fraternal love present between believers. It is born in the common bond that they share as brothers in Christ and members of the same body which is His church. In his first letter, Peter suggested that this love is natural to a certain extent being the result of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. (1 Peter 1:22)
- b) A definite relationship exists between brotherly kindness and charity or love. Brotherly affection must be nurtured and cultivated into an active and forgiving self-sacrificing love. Love is the completion or the perfecting of our faith. (Col. 3:12-14) If this love is not present, one is not of God. (1 John 3:10-11)

***v.1:8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make [you that ye shall] neither [be] barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.***

Peter places two possible paths before his readers. The first, discussed in this verse, is to take his advice by “adding” the prescribed virtues to their faith. They are to increase or abound in them, that is, to cultivate them in their lives and to experience growth.

- a) It has already been established that as believers “these things” were available to them in their acknowledgement of Jesus Christ. Walking in these graces and in accordance with the precious promises they were given, they would show themselves to be approved. (vs. 3-4)

- b) Incorporating Peter's plan, they would not be idle, inactive and unproductive in the faith. The sense of this verse is that if these things are abounding in them it served as proof or as an encouragement to them that His divine power was indeed real and alive in their lives. Implied is the idea of assurance on their part.

***v.1:9 But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.***

The second path is to cease to cultivate virtues in their lives as believers. In the Christian walk one is either moving forward or backward, there is no standing still. On this path they will soon become idle, unfruitful and backslide in the faith.

- a) Peter tells them that if they are not progressing in the faith, they are blind or at the very least nearsighted. He seems to give degrees of the same ailment, namely, the failure to see the big picture or the full ramifications of the gospel message in their lives. Specifically, they fail to understand themselves as being strangers in this world and those called to truth and holiness.
- b) They forget the power that they possess in Christ and the fact that they are no longer in bondage to sin. They fall back into their former lifestyle. Feeling powerless and defeated, possibly in despair, they lose their peace and assurance in Christ. (Heb. 5:11-14)

***v.1:10 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:***

Peter urges them as brothers to follow the first path thereby making their calling and election sure. With the phrase "give diligence" he exhorts them to give every effort to grow in their faith and knowledge of God, thus gaining peace and assurance.

- a) Peter speaks of their own personal assurance, of the fact that they have been called and elected by God. Their assurance, or lack of it, has nothing to do with the calling and electing process of God. God desires His children to have every assurance that they are indeed eternally secure. (1 John 5:13)
- b) Believers gain assurance as they progress in the faith; as they see change in their lives, in their wants and in their desires. They gain assurance as they see themselves conformed more and more to the image of Christ and less and less to the things of the world.

*"It cannot refer to God, for no act of theirs could make it more certain on his part, if they had actually been chosen to eternal life. Still, God everywhere treats men as moral agents; and what may be absolutely certain in his mind from the mere purpose that it shall be so, is to be made certain to us only by evidence, and in the free exercise of our own powers. The meaning here is, that they were to obtain such evidences of personal piety as to put the question whether they were called and chosen, so far as their own minds were concerned, to rest; or so as to have undoubted evidence on this point."* Albert Barnes

- c) The Greek word translated "fall" means "to stumble" or "to reverse direction." The idea is that as long as the believer walks forward on the path of growth and holiness, ever gaining assurance, he will never turn back.

***v.1:11 For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.***

The end of the path described above is an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The idea is that being fruitful in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and in so doing, having full assurance of your calling and election, you will enter into heaven victoriously or triumphantly.

- a) The entrance will be “ministered unto you.” The word translated “ministered” is the same word that was earlier translated “add.” As you have been adding virtue in your life, so God will add this entrance into His kingdom to somehow complete you and honor you.

In the Old Testament, Elijah entered heaven in a chariot. In the New Testament, Stephen sees Jesus Christ standing at the Father’s side to welcome him into glory. Paul was confident he would enter into the heavenlies victoriously. (2 Tim. 4:6-8) On the other hand, both Paul as well as Jude speak of those who will enter heaven “smelling of smoke.” (1 Cor. 3:13-15; Jude 23)

Believers it seems, will receive different crowns or rewards as well as unique entrances into heaven based on how they have lived their life.

***v.1:12. Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know [them], and be established in the present truth.***

Peter sees it as his duty, as a minister of the gospel, to constantly remind them of the truth he presents in this letter. He does this knowing of the importance of these things as well as the fact that their natural tendency is to forget.

- a) What he refers to as “these things” include the “great and precious promises,” the fact that they are “partakers of the divine nature,” that they have “escaped the corruption that is in the world,” and that they have been given “all things that pertain unto life and godliness,” and that they are to give “diligence to make their calling and election sure” through the adding and perfecting of virtues in their life. Other “things” that he will remind them of in this letter is the importance of the word, a warning against false teachers and the importance of persevering to the end.
- b) The readers know all of these things and are even established in them, that is, they have received them as truth. However, Peter realizes that “the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” He knows that in the flesh man is forgetful, easily distracted and can become oblivious to the spiritual warfare he is engaged in.
- c) In the Old Testament, God warned His people of this human weakness and instituted the Passover feast as a time of remembrance. (Deut. 4:8-9; Exod. 12:24-27) In the New Testament the Lord’s table was instituted to be a remembrance. (Luke 22:19)

*“Men are liable to forget them, and they do not exert the influence over them which they ought. It is the office of the ministry not only to impart to a people truths which they did not know before, but a large part of their work is to bring to recollection well-known truths, and to seek that they may exert a proper influence on the life. Amidst the cares, the business, the amusements, and the*

*temptations of the world, even true Christians are prone to forget them; and the ministers of the gospel render them an essential service, even if they should do nothing more than remind them of the truths which are well understood, and which they have known before.” Albert Barnes*

***v.1:13 Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting [you] in remembrance;***

Peter emphasizes what he seems to view as one of his final duties as an apostle, that being, putting them in remembrance. He basically says, almost as if “thinking” out loud, “Yes, I believe it is right, as long as I am alive, to put you in remembrance.”

- a) Reminding them of “these things” was to stir them up, which means to wake them or to arouse them as if from sleep. Being established in these truths they might have a tendency to become mundane to them. Peter is determined that they not lose their zeal for Jesus Christ and the gospel message. Peter is determined that they not leave their “first love”. (Rev. 2:2-4)
- b) Paul was also aware of this tendency of the flesh and used the exact same language to exhort Timothy not to become complacent in his duties. (2 Tim. 1:6)
- c) Tabernacle was a descriptive term for the body. It was a tent or a temporary dwelling. The idea is that the body was a temporary dwelling place for the soul, and so, providing Peter with all the more reason to put them in remembrance. (2 Cor. 5:1)

***v.1:14 Knowing that shortly I must put off [this] my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me.***

Having alluded to the fact in the previous verse, Peter here confirms that he has an impending sense that his time is short. He is going to soon die.

- a) Jesus Christ had told Peter of his death. He told him that he would be old and also that his death would be by the hands of others. (John 21:18-19) The word in this particular verse that is translated “shortly” means “swiftly and suddenly.” Did Peter receive additional information not recorded, or was he simply aware of his age, and the predicted suddenness of his death to bring about this sense of urgency to put the churches in remembrance?
- b) Peter incorporates the use of another metaphor in this verse with the phrase “put off.” It refers to the taking off of cloths. Peter views his soul as clothed in flesh and death the removing of the flesh as one would take off a garment.

*“Whatever may be the signs of its approach, whether sickness or grey hairs, we should meditate much upon an event so solemn to us; and as these indications thicken we should be more diligent, as Peter was, in doing the work that God has given us to do.” Albert Barnes.*

***v.1:15 Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance.***

Peter adds that his purpose in writing these things is so that they will always have his words before them to serve as a remembrance even after his death.

- a) Peter writes this letter as part of the written record that would put all believers in remembrance for all time. He understood that scripture was being written and of its importance. (v. 3:15-16)
- b) From the last several verses it is apparent that Peter did not trust these things to an oral tradition, but sensed it was his duty, as well as the duty of others, to commit these things to writing as part of a permanent record and as scripture.
- c) For the third verse in a row, Peter employs the use of another interesting and descriptive word in referring to his death. The word translated “decrease” means “a departure or a journey out” as if to leave one place in order to take up permanent residence in a distant land.

***v.1:16. For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.***

It is important to always have these things in remembrance for it is truth and not cleverly devised myths. It is the truth of God and not the mere fancies of men perpetrated upon them for personal gain.

- a) In this verse Peter places himself with the other apostles as he changes from the singular “I” to the plural “we.” Peter is one among a group of credible eyewitnesses. He also places himself and his doctrine against that of the false teachers whom he will address shortly.
- b) The apostle spoke of the power of Christ of which they were eyewitnesses. This probably refers to the manifestation of the divine nature in Him, both the power that was evident in His teachings and confirmed in the miracles He performed. The ultimate demonstration of power being the resurrection from the dead.
- c) The coming of our Lord Jesus Christ probably refers to His human nature or His coming in the flesh through which the power was manifested as stated above. It most likely refers to His impeccable life, character and being without sin.
- d) Finally, they were eyewitnesses of His majesty which incorporates all of the above ideas. It is the glory that He possessed as God. The glory that was more fully shown to Peter, James and John when Christ was transformed. (John 1:14)

***v.1:17 - 18 For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.***

Peter tells them the story of what is called the transfiguration. It was an extraordinary story and one that his readers had no doubt heard before. But Peter reminds them of it, and in so doing, emphasizes that it was not a myth, but the truth.

- a) Jesus Christ was honored and glorified by God in the presence of Peter. He was honored by the voice of God, declaring Him to be His Son in whom He was well pleased and although not mentioned here, He was honored by the presence of Moses and Elijah.
- b) He received glory in that by the power of God His body was changed. The face of Jesus shone as the sun and His clothing became as light. (Matt. 17:1-9)
- c) Moses and Elijah represented the law and the prophets respectively. The voice of God proclaimed Jesus to be the Son of God. This event was confirmation that Jesus Christ was the Messiah, one who shared in the divine nature and to whom the law and the prophets pointed.

***v.1:19. We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:***

Peter understands that the things he had observed, the things he now shares with his readers, could easily be considered by those not familiar with the events that had taken place in Jerusalem decades earlier as cunningly devised fables due to their extraordinary nature.

- a) He points them to the scriptures, that word of prophecy, calling them more sure or confirmed than his eyewitness testimony. The scriptures provided a history of God's intervention in human affairs. They recorded numerous miracles and extraordinary events witnessed by an untold number of individuals over a period of thousands of years.
- b) Furthermore, they were in complete harmony. A series of predictions, events and fulfillment that all pointed to the coming of the Son of God. The glory of Jesus Christ was demonstrated to Peter in the transfiguration, but is more fully shown to all through the scriptures.

Peter exhorts his readers to go to the scriptures and to be convinced by them in their own minds and hearts. They are not merely to take Peter's word, but to study, investigate and scrutinize the "word of prophecy" preserved for them. To do so is a good thing that would prove to be of great benefit to them.

- a) They are to take heed or to approach the scriptures as they would a light that is shone into a dark place. One cannot help but notice a light in a dark place. One is immediately attracted to it. The word should draw them in this way. They should follow it or be led by it. (Ps. 119:105)
- b) The scriptures will lead them to salvation, to that great awakening compared here to the rising of the sun that swallows up the darkness. The light of Christ will shine in their hearts. (Rev. 22:16)

***v.1:20 – 21 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake [as they were] moved by the Holy Ghost.***

Peter informs his readers that in turning to the scriptures the first thing that they should always bear in mind is that no prophecy of the scripture originated in the mind of its writer or was the product of any man in any way.

- a) This is why they are to take heed and study it for it is truly the words of God. This is why the scripture can lead to and impart spiritual life. This is wherein its power lies in that it originated with God. The scripture should always be approached with this in mind.
- b) Peter admits that men spoke the words and recorded the words of the prophecy of scripture, but emphasizes that the words were not by the will of man, neither were they the ideas of those who spoke and recorded them.
- c) The word translated “moved” is a nautical term and refers to a boat being moved by the wind upon its sail. These “holy men” set apart and appointed by God were moved in this manner by the Holy Ghost. (1 Peter 1:10-12; Heb. 10:15-17; 2 Tim. 3:16-17)
- d) It follows that the meaning of the scriptures must be derived by careful study and with the presence of the Holy Ghost that inspired it. (2 Tim. 2:15; 1 John 2:27)
- e) The bible is self-contained. It is scripture that must interpret scripture. Man’s knowledge of spiritual things is limited to what God has revealed to him. (Is. 28:9-10; Acts 17:11)

*“... no man nor company of men, no church nor public officers, are to interpret the Scripture of their own heads, according to their own minds, so as to make their private sense to be the sense of the Scripture, but to seek the understanding of it from God, who shows them the meaning of the word itself, (the more obscure places being expounded by the more clear) and by his Spirit leads believers, in their searching the Scripture, into the understanding of his mind in it.”* Matthew Poole

***v.2:1 But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.***

Peter informs his readers that along with these holy men of God who were moved by the Holy Ghost to compose the scripture, walked false prophets who were not of God. He does not state any of the numerous examples of false prophets in the Old Testament, but simply states their presence as being a fact.

- a) He uses this fact to caution them that false teachers were surely present in their midst. There were false prophets then and there are false prophets now. Paul issued even stronger words of caution concerning false teachers in his farewell address to the Ephesian elders. (Acts 20:29-31)
- b) Peter wants them to understand that this is a fact of life. Truth and error exist together and are in opposition to each other. The truth is always under attack and a discerning spirit grounded in truth is a must. (Matt. 24:23-26; 1 Tim 4:1)
- c) They introduce false doctrine “privily” which means “to lead in by the side of others” or “to lead in along with others.” In other words, they sneak it in slyly and craftily along side of the truth.

It reminds me of the trick used in our government. A bill is presented that will accomplish a great good and everyone at face value would vote for it, but “tacked-on” to this bill are several “pet projects” of a party that are not good, however, are overshadowed by the main clause of the bill.

- d) What they bring in are “damnable heresies,” that is, thoughts or ideas that tend to usurp the truth of the gospel and if followed or adhered to will bring destruction to the soul.
- e) The end of these thoughts or philosophies, interpretations or opinions, were the denial in some way of Jesus Christ or His finished work. As Poole puts it, “*either in their word or their practices, either directly, or by consequence of their doctrines or actions; they that profess they know God, but contradict that profession in their lives, are said to deny him.*” (Titus 1:16)
- f) The false teachers are their own worst enemies for they will bring upon themselves the judgment and wrath of God which is said to be swift. The consequences of which will overtake them both in this life and in eternity.

***v.2:2 And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.***

Peter predicts that many professing believers would follow after their false doctrine and their resulting evil ways. Whatever these heresies, it appears that Christ was denied mostly by their actions. It would seem that a lifestyle something less than holy was deemed to be acceptable.

- a) Many will follow these teachers into the destruction described in verse one. This is because the ideas and philosophies which are conceived in the heart of man cater to

the lusts of the flesh. As Barnes puts it, “Men who are corrupt at heart often seek to obtain for their corruptions the sanction of religion.” (2 Tim. 4:3-4)

- b) These individuals professed to be Christians and so their conduct brought reproach upon Christ and misrepresented the tenants of the gospel. The teachings of Christ would be viewed as being responsible for their actions. (1 Peter 4:15)

***v.2:3 And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.***

The false prophets of old as well as the false teachers now among those to whom Peter wrote are characterized by greed. They covet not only wealth, but also power and recognition. They love money and/or themselves more than they love God.

- a) Their goal is to make merchandise of their followers, that is, to view them as a source and as a means to feed their greed. Poole says they view their followers “as slaves or beasts,” while Barnes compares their view of their followers as “a bale of goods.”
- b) The tool they employ to reach their goal is “feigned words”, that is, words of flattery and deceit. They mixed the truth with errors that would appeal to whosoever their listeners happened to be.

“The idea is, that the doctrines which they would defend were not maintained by solid and substantial arguments, but that they would make use of plausible reasoning made up for the occasion.” Albert Barnes

- c) So these individuals simply do not care. They are deceitful and their outward sincerity is nothing but pretense, a means to attempt to satisfy their inner selfishness and greed. What a far cry from the true teacher of God who serves with genuine love putting the needs of others before his own. (1 Thes. 2:3-12)
- d) Peter assures his readers that judgment was pronounced on these individuals long ago and is drawing ever nearer to its execution. Their destiny is destruction and condemnation which is not on hold or sleeping, but is actively in the works ever progressing to its God-ordained end. (2 Peter 3:7-9)

***v.2:4 For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast [them] down to hell, and delivered [them] into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;***

Peter presents the first in a series of examples proving that God does render judgment and executes His vengeance on those that oppose Him. Peter’s readers could rest assured that the false teachers among them would be dealt with in a fashion similar to the examples he will present.

- a) Angels sinned and were not spared the consequences. The idea is, that if angels, who are heavenly beings and greater than men were not spared, then how could men hope to somehow escape or be overlooked. Power and/or position did not exempt one from judgment.

- b) These angels were cast into hell. Peter uses a word from Greek mythology (Tartarus) probably for the benefit of his readers. It was a place where the wicked were imprisoned and tormented.
- c) “Chains of darkness” probably are not literal chains (remember we are dealing with spiritual beings) but they are held in darkness or prisoners of darkness unable to regain their former position. In this state they remain set-aside until their full and everlasting torment will be made known.

***v.2:5 And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth [person], a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;***

With the example of Noah, Peter demonstrates to his readers that sheer numbers will not deter the judgment of God. He destroyed the population of the entire world as a result of their sin.

- a) Only eight individuals were saved, that being Noah and his immediate family. The idea is, that if God was willing to destroy the world because of unrighteousness, then what chance do the false teachers have to avoid judgment even though they have many followers?
- b) Noah was a preacher of righteousness standing up against an entire world because he believed God. It was his faith in God by which he was saved. (Heb. 11:7)

***v.2:6 And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned [them] with an overthrow, making [them] an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly;***

The third example given as to the sure judgment of the ungodly is the destruction of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha. They were utterly overthrown and destroyed being reduced to ashes.

- a) The entire plain of Jordan which included two additional cities were completely destroyed. (Gen. 19:24-25) Many believe that this is the area that today is covered by the Dead Sea.
- b) Again, it was a judgment of God brought upon them because of sin and wickedness, especially the sin of homosexuality. (Gen. 19:4-5)
- c) The event was particularly meant to be an example which would stand throughout the ages as to the judgment that would come upon the ungodly. It is mentioned or used as an example by Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Amos, Jesus Christ, Paul, here by Peter and also by Jude.

***v.2:7-8 And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed [his] righteous soul from day to day with [their] unlawful deeds;)***

Lot, the nephew of Abraham, was delivered by God from the destruction that came upon the region. Like Noah, it was his righteousness before God that saved him.

- a) In Lot, Peter describes the anxiety felt by a righteous man who lives in an area of total depravity. The sin of this area was commonplace and out in the open. The things that he saw daily were tormenting his soul.

If you read his story, Lot had some definite problems. His love for wealth is what probably caused him to live among wicked men in the first place and also made him reluctant to leave his possessions behind while facing impending doom. What he is commended for here, however, is that his sense of righteousness was never dulled or compromised. He hated sin and wickedness, never getting used to it or accepting it. His soul was tormented by it daily for some sixteen years.

***v.2:9 The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:***

From his examples, Peter concludes that God knows how to deliver the godly and how to punish the unjust. This is a statement of consolation and assurance. False teachers would come and even seem to gain the upper hand by the power they held or by the numbers that would follow them, but just as was the case in the past, God is in control and will deal with them in a way consistent with His righteousness.

- a) Noah was kept by the grace of God for 120 years as he preached the righteousness of God to an unbelieving world. He was preserved and finally delivered on that day of God's judgment. Likewise, those who perished in the flood were reserved or set-aside by God unto that day showing God was in control the entire time.
- b) Lot was kept by the grace of God for some 16 years living in one of the most depraved societies the world has ever known. On that day of judgment, he was delivered, as that region being reserved by God to be an example to the unrighteous for all time, was totally destroyed.

*"God's knowing here implies not only his infinite wisdom, whereby he is never at a loss, but knows all the various ways whereby the godly may be delivered; but likewise his love and goodwill to them, whereby he is ready to do it, hath a heart for it: so the word is taken."* Matthew Poole

- c) So God knows what he is doing, even though we His people may not readily understand, for His ways are far above ours and past finding out, however, the believer, just as the righteous men of old, can rest assured that God hears the cry of the righteous. (Ps. 34:15-19) The believer can rest assured that the day of judgment will come.

***v.2:10 But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous [are they], selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.***

Peter, having assured his readers through past examples that evil will not triumph beyond the limits set by God, and that the godly will be delivered while the unjust will be punished, again turns his attention to those false teachers that were now among them.

- a) All false teaching will be exposed and all false teachers punished, but Peter lists the characteristics of those false teachers that will soon come under the judgment of

God in particular. As Poole puts it, “*The sense is, that God reserves all wicked men to the day of judgment, but those especially that second their corrupt doctrine with a wicked conversation.*”

- b) These individuals are controlled by the flesh. Even though they may proclaim Jesus Christ, it is obvious that their pleasure is in carnal things. Especially mentioned is their doctrine for things of a filthy or immoral nature.
- c) They despise government which is representative of all authority. They hate to be told what to do, but themselves crave the power that they would deny others to whom it rightfully belongs. The term applies to all authority civil as well as religious, possibly even including Christ himself. (v. 2:1)
- d) Needless to say, they are bold, stubborn, and arrogant. They are not afraid to openly slander those in authority, thus showing a total lack of respect and protocol.

The word “dignities” means “glories.” There is some question as to exactly what Peter had in mind. Some suppose he meant anyone in an authoritative role such as kings, magistrates, church leaders, or even heads of families. In this case the false teachers would try to usurp any authority figure that stood in their way. Others interpret “glories” as celestial beings. If this is true the idea is that they openly slander spiritual beings, including Satan and as Kistemaker puts it, “... *in their arrogance transgress the limits God has set.*”

***v.2:11 Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord.***

Continuing to paint a picture of the unbelievable arrogance of these false teachers, Peter uses the angels as an example.

- a) There is no doubt that angels are greater in rank and ability than any human authority figure, greater than the false teachers, as well as greater in the eyes of God than Satan, yet, they do not slanderously accuse those to whom they are superior.
- b) The angels are examples of true beings of power and might that know their place. Michael the archangel would not even bring a railing accusation against Satan, who would be the most deserving of such slander. (Jude 8-9) Satan is the accuser; the father of all the bold, stubborn and arrogant, and so, the father of these false teachers. (Rev. 12:10)

***v.2:12 But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption;***

Whoever these false teachers were, Peter’s disdain for them is obvious as in the strongest language possible he compares them to the wild animals.

- a) The idea is that these men follow the instincts and passions of their human nature without constraint. In this way they are as wild animals, irrational and incapable of reason. Animals cannot separate themselves from their instinctive behaviors and so become easy prey for rational beings such as man.

- b) Probably still in reference to the “dignities” mentioned above, whether it refers to governments that God has put in place or to the mysteries of the workings in the spiritual realm, these men speak evil of things they don’t understand. They speak evil instinctively and out of ignorance, unable to understand spiritual things.
- c) The end of these individuals will be as that of the beasts to which they are compared. Just as animals who live by instincts usually meet an untimely end, so the sins and passions that control these men will be their downfall.

*“Brute-creatures follow the instinct of their sensitive appetite, and sinful man follows the inclination of his carnal mind; these refuse to employ the understanding and reason God has given them, and so are ignorant of what they might and ought to know.”* Matthew Henry

***v.2:13 And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, [as] they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots [they are] and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you;***

The wages of sin is death, and so, these individuals receive the just wages of their unrighteousness both in this world and in eternity. There seemed to be a need on Peter’s part to assure his readers that these individuals would indeed be judged by God. Perhaps they were currently prospering or held positions of esteem in the church.

- a) Their boldness or arrogance in their sin is again emphasized with the reference to “taking pleasure to riot in the daytime.” They were shameless, sinning openly and taking pleasure in it. They did not try to hide or conceal their many indiscretions. (Rom. 13:12-13)
- b) Peter likens them to spots and blemishes that mar the beauty of the church which is the body of Christ. They pretend to be of God associating and feasting with those who are of the truth, but in reality are victims of their own deceptions, which they shamelessly promote and take pleasure.

*“They sport themselves while they so finely deceive you, pretending love in their feasting with you, when they do it only to gratify their appetites.”* Matthew Poole

***v.2:14 Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children:***

Sex and money are the true love and motivation of these false prophets. This has remained so throughout the centuries and even to this day.

- a) They have eyes that are full of adultery, or even more literally, full of the adulteress. The meaning is that they constantly search for someone to commit adultery with. The word “full” means that this is their prime concern and motivation. It is what they are constantly thinking about. In this way they are constantly in sin. (Matt. 5:28)
- b) In turn, these individuals bait or trap the weak among them. This is still in the context of sexual sin. Through false doctrine or carnal logic they get others to fulfil their lusts.

- c) Peter turns to their other chief motivation, namely, money and greed. They exercised their hearts in greed increasing its strength and power over them. They were skilled in the art of using religion to obtain money.
- d) These teachers or prophets are not of God, but are children of the curse. They are not renewed even though they have joined themselves to the people of God even proclaiming themselves as teachers or as enlightened.

***v.2:15 - 16 Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam [the son] of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet.***

Peter uses the example of the Old Testament prophet Balaam to illustrate to his readers the depth of the greed of the modern day or false teachers who were among them. They knew the right way, but their greed prevented them from committing themselves to it.

- a) Balaam consulted with God. (Num. 22:10-12) He was told by God of His plans for the Israelites, and yet, blinded by greed he strove against God so he could obtain earthly gain. He tried to turn God away from the Israelites first by sacrifice and then by beguiling the Israelites to sin. (Rev. 2:14)
- b) These false teachers, as Balaam, have no true love for God or for His people, but instead love the gains and pleasures that sin can give them. In their arrogance they think they can change the will or the decrees of God for their personal benefit.
- c) Peter calls their mindset one of madness. It is a madness brought upon them by sin. The madness is illustrated in that the donkey once given the power of speech had more insight than Balaam. It also provided encouragement to those to whom Peter wrote to boldly rebuke the false teachers among them.

***v.2:17 These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever.***

Peter continues his discourse on false prophets using examples from nature to describe the true emptiness of their doctrines. They are examples that his readers could readily identify with.

- a) The false teachers are compared to dry wells. They appear to be a source of refreshment, but in reality are a grave disappointment. Their doctrines are empty and cannot give or support spiritual life. (John 4:13-14; 7:37-38)
- b) In the same light they are as storm clouds. It appears the heavens will open and the earth receives needed rain, but the winds pick up and the thirsty earth is deprived of the cleansing and life giving deluge. (Jude 12-13)
- c) One of the underlying themes of this chapter is God's judgment upon the false teachers. Peter again assures his readers that judgment has already been pronounced and the place of darkness is reserved for these individuals.

***v.2:18 For when they speak great swelling [words] of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, [through much] wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error.***

Peter instructs his readers as to some of the tactics used by the false teachers. He desires to expose their methods so they can be readily identified and avoided, or better still, confronted.

- a) They are great orators. They boast of great wisdom, learning and knowledge. They probably claimed some type of spiritual enlightenment, but their only skill lied in making themselves to be something that they are not.

*“Truth is simple, and delights in simple statements. It expects to make its way by its own intrinsic force, and is willing to pass for what it is worth. Error is noisy and declamatory, and hopes to succeed by substituting sound sense, and by such tones and arts as shall induce men to believe that what is said is true, when it is known by the speaker to be false.”* Albert Barnes

- b) They use their words and philosophies as a skilled fisherman uses a baited hook. What they are out to catch are the desires of the flesh, the worldly nature that still resides in us all. Although specific doctrines are not given, the word “wantonness” suggests things of a sexual nature. Man’s materialistic nature and sexual appetites are what their doctrines target.
- c) They do not target the heathen, but the churched. Those who have separated themselves from the world to varying degrees and have recognized the benefits of religion. Those most susceptible are professing Christians who have not been renewed as well as the weak, earlier called “unstable souls.” (v. 14)

***v.2:19 While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.***

Finally providing some insight into the specific doctrines of these individuals, Peter tells us that the promise to their listeners was that of liberty or freedom. Together with what had already been said, this suggests that these teachers promoted the idea that the body was for sin, while with the spirit one served God.

- a) These heretical ideas were prevalent in the early days of the gospel and stemmed from an erroneous conception of God's grace. (Rom. 3:8, 6:1; Jude 4) As Peter said, such ideas are appealing for they in effect give one a license to sin; to fulfil lusts of the flesh under the disguise of religion.
- b) In reality, the very men who promise them freedom are themselves hopelessly enslaved to the corruption of their flesh, for in their flesh were such ideas and doctrines born. They are overcome by sin, unregenerate men who as stated earlier “cannot cease from sin.” (Rom. 6:16-18)

***v.2:20 For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.***

It was the knowledge of Jesus Christ by which they “escaped from them who live in error.” It was the knowledge of Jesus Christ that separated both the false teachers as well as their followers from the common sins of the world. It made them take a step back, take a look at their life and change.

*“A religious education has restrained many whom the grace of God has not renewed: if we receive the light of the truth, and have a notional knowledge of Christ in our heads, it may be of some present service to us; but we must receive the love of the truth, and hide God’s word in our heart, or it will not sanctify and save us.”* Matthew Henry

- a) However, they soon became entangled in their old sins and taken over by them. Their sins and desires dictated their doctrine and formed their religion. They did the same things, fulfilled the same passions, but under the disguise of religion. They fit Christ into their sin. (Rom. 2:17-24)
- b) Their situation is worse than before simply because having a false sense of righteousness their sin increases and their conscience becomes seared or ineffective.

***v.2:21 For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known [it], to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.***

The judgment of the false teachers will be harsher for they sin against knowledge. They rejected God’s plan of salvation and a resulting life of holiness. In doing so they blasphemed the Holy Spirit.

- a) It is worse for them for their behavior brings disdain upon the church and attempts to undermine the truth of God. (v. 2:2) It is worse for them for God will most likely give them over to the desires of their flesh. (2 Thes. 2:10-12; Rom. 1:28) It is worse for them because having turned from the holy commandment there is no other way of salvation. (Heb. 10:26)

***v.2:22 But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog [is] turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.***

Peter quotes a proverb attesting to its truthfulness concerning these false teachers and their followers. The proverb explains their behavior by proving that these individuals were never renewed in the Spirit of Christ.

- a) The dog and the pig were unclean animals under the Jewish law, and so, the comparison to the false teachers showed that these men remained unregenerate. Just as the dog or the pig, or as animals in general, they were ruled by the natural instincts of their fallen nature. Although for a time they were relieved or cleaned they went back to what they were by nature. (1 John 2:19)
- b) The example of the dog is taken from Proverbs 26:11, while the example of the pig is not found in the scriptures. The later could have been a well known saying of the day of which Peter confirms its truth. Christ used both the dog and the pig as negative examples in His preaching. (Matt. 7:6)

*“This passage is often quoted to prove ‘the possibility of falling from grace, and from a very high degree of it, too.’ But it is one of the last passages in the bible that should be adduced to prove that doctrine. The true point of this passage is to show that the persons referred to never were changed; that whatever external reformation might have occurred, their nature remained the same; and that when they apostatized from their outward profession, they merely acted out of their nature, and showed that in fact there had been no real change.”* Albert Barnes

***v.3:1. This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in [both] which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance:***

Having found it necessary to speak at length about the false teachers who had infiltrated the churches of this particular region, Peter re-states to his beloved readers his purpose in writing. This is the second letter he has written to them and both shared a common purpose or goal.

- a) Peter's intent is to "stir-up their pure minds," that is , minds that were of the truth or disposed to the truth, but were in need of being aroused or awakened. He wants to rekindle in them a zeal for the truth as one would stir up glowing embers until they once again burst into a flame.
- b) He endeavors to accomplish this simply by putting them in remembrance of the truth. Truths that they had already heard, believed and received. As he put these things before them it would act as oxygen upon fire and the flames of truth would be rekindled within them. (v. 1:12-13)
- c) The false teachers were strong, relentless and successful. (v. 2:2) Complacency and compromise tended to set in. On top of this, those of the truth were consistently bombarded with the cares and concerns of this life. Those who adhered to the truth were battle weary. Believers need to be reminded and stirred up in the word. (1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim 1:6-7, 13)

***v.3:2 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:***

It is the word of God that will stimulate them and sustain them. It is the word of God that Peter reminds them of and of which they themselves should always be mindful. The word of God is the believers strength, comfort and guide. It is the truth that separates them from the world linking them to God and to each other.

- a) Peter links the Old and New Testaments. The words that were spoken before by the prophets confirm and are in agreement with the gospel proclaimed by the apostles of Jesus Christ. They are timeless and eternal words emanating from the mind of God, as revealed to man by the prophets and apostles. (Eph. 2:20)
- b) Being the words of God they are powerful words. Words that can truly stir up the enlightened mind and touch the regenerate heart. They are the voice of God that the righteous hear and to which they respond. (John 10:27-28)

***v.3:3-4. Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as [they were] from the beginning of the creation.***

As an apostle of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Peter instructs them with words of which they should henceforth be mindful. He deals with a particular mindset that obviously had been troubling them. The phrase "knowing this first" simply emphasizes the importance of what he is going to say.

- a) Peter tells them that individuals whom he describes as “scoffers” would be present in the last days. This is the period of time in which Peter wrote and in which we still live. In the scriptures this is the final dispensation or the time between the first and second coming.
- b) Scoffers and mockers. They ridicule the truth out of ignorance and unbelief. It is ignorance and unbelief that directs their actions. In this particular instance they fail to curb their natural desires and live in accordance with their natural lusts.
- c) The truth they mock or scoff at is the second coming. It would follow that they also scoffed at the deity of Jesus Christ and possibly even the existence of God. Their mindset was that nothing ever changes. Jesus had lived, he died, he supposedly had arisen, but still no judgment had occurred. The world, in their eyes, remained the same as it had always been; governed by the same natural laws of life and death. There was no real evidence of God or of some impending judgment.

Some two thousand years have passed since Peter penned these words and the scoffers still exist, becoming more confident in their ignorance with each passing day. Armed with their theories and sciences they mock the truth of God as the Christian holding on to the word of God as his faith patiently waits.

***v.3:5-6 For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:***

Peter reminds his readers that all things had not been the same from the beginning of creation. Putting them in remembrance of this truth should stir them up, giving them confidence and a renewed hope when confronted with the words of the scoffers.

- a) The world that God had called into existence was quite different from the world they now knew. God had divided the waters creating an expanse or firmament between the waters that were above and those that were below. From the waters that were below God called out the land. (Gen. 1:6-9) It did not rain in the old or original world, but a different system was in place. (Gen. 2:5-6)
- b) By the word of God this world was changed as the waters were again allowed to overtake the land. The world they lived in was the aftermath of this judgment of God. (Gen. 7:11)
- c) They were ignorant of these facts. Both that God had called the world into existence by His word as well as that He had once destroyed the world by the same word. The word “willingly” suggests that these scoffers need not be ignorant of these things for the knowledge as well as the evidence is available, but they have either forgotten or refused to consider it. (Rom. 1:19-22)

***v.3:7 But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.***

The present form of this world, the heavens and the earth of Peter’s time which has continued until this day, including all of the governing laws of physics and nature,

continue in existence by the word of God. (Col. 1:16-17)

- a) By His word and will the earth is “kept in store” which according to Poole means, “*are kept safe as in a treasury, and untouched for a time.*” He has decided to leave the earth as it is for a specific time and for a specific purpose.
- b) The present world will be destroyed by fire on that day. Just as was the case with the flood it will coincide with God’s judgment of the ungodly. This was not new information for the world ending in fire was predicted throughout the Old Testament. (Is. 66:15-16; Nahum 1:5-6)

***v.3:8. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day [is] with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.***

Addressing them as beloved, Peter tenderly reminds them that God is eternal. This is something the scoffers had either long since forgotten or a fact that they rejected entirely. God is timeless and Himself the creator of time as we know it.

- a) What is a very long time to men (indicated here by a thousand years) is in reality no time at all to God (indicated here by a day). So the length of time that has passed, as they perceive it, is not an argument as to the validity of God’s promise.
- b) God’s purposes are accomplished in His time. It is of very little consequence to God whether it be in a day or in a thousand years. As Barnes writes it, “*Man has but a short time to live; and if he does not accomplish his purpose in a very brief period, he never will. But it is not so with God. He always lives; and we cannot therefore infer, because the execution of his purposes seems to be delayed, that they are abandoned.*”

***v.3:9. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.***

Peter assures his readers that the Lord has neither delayed nor abandoned His coming. His promises stand sure and their fulfillment will not be hurried or delayed, but will happen at the appointed time.

- a) With the phrase “as some men count slackness”, Peter again emphasizes that God’s ways are not our ways; His timetable and perception of time is different than mans. Having already addressed the scoffers, he is probably here addressing believers who were becoming impatient and who’s faith was being shaken as a result of an erroneous belief that the Lord would return in their lifetime. (1 Thes. 4:13-15; 2 Thes. 2:2-3)
- b) The proper view of the matter is that the great patience and forbearance of God is being extended toward man. God desires all men to come to repentance and holds back His judgment until the last man that will come to repentance does so.
- c) His sheep hear his voice and God knows who the last person is who will respond to his invitation to come. So what men count as slackness or even abandonment is in reality an ongoing demonstration of God’s mercy, love and patience.

**v.3:10 *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.***

Peter emphatically states that “the day of the Lord”, that is, the day He shall return will indeed come, and using the example of Christ, states that it will come as does a thief in the night.

- a) The analogy is meant to show that His coming will happen suddenly and unexpectedly at a time of relative quiet when most will be unprepared. (Matt. 24:42-44; 25:1-6 (both the wise and the foolish slept); 1 Thes 5:2-3)
- b) The heavens will pass away, that is, what we consider the heavens; the sky, atmosphere and stars will cease to be and this event will be accompanied with a great noise ... (God’s big bang!). The elements or building blocks of which things are composed will come apart as the earth and everything in it is destroyed with a fervent heat.

**v.3:11. *[Seeing] then [that] all these things shall be dissolved, what manner [of persons] ought ye to be in [all] holy conversation and godliness,***

With the phrase “seeing then”, Peter assures them that what he has said is an absolute and unavoidable truth. Everything that they see and know of will be dissolved, that is, it will again melt into the chaos from which it was called into being. The earth will again be “without form and void”.

- a) He uses this fact to exhort them to holy living and godliness. This should be their first priority for it is the only thing that will last and which will avail them in eternity. Why should they concentrate their efforts on worldly things if all that they accumulate and hold dear will disappear? They are to glorify God in this life as His children being witnesses to the world. (1 John 2:15-17)

*“An habitual contemplation of the truth, that all that we see is soon to pass away, would produce a most salutary effect on the mind. It would make us serious. It would repress ambition. It would lead us not to desire to accumulate what must so soon be destroyed. It would cause us to ask with deep earnestness whether we are prepared for these amazing scenes, should they suddenly burst upon us.”* Albert Barnes

**v.3:12 *Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?***

Furthermore, the day described is not to be one of dread for the believer, in fact, Peter tells them they are to look forward to or to live with a constant expectation of that day. The word “hasting” means “to await with an eager desire”. The Christian should live his life longing for that day.

- a) Believers should not be fearful for it is the day of God. The day when their redemption will be complete and the day when they shall go to be forever with the Lord. The fire and corresponding heat is God’s vengeance that will be directed toward the ungodly. (2 Thes. 1:7-9)

- b) Peter's description of the coming end of all things is consistent with the description rendered throughout the Old Testament. (Mal. 4:1; Isa. 34:4)

***v.3:13 Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.***

Believers are to await the coming day of God with an eager desire because He has promised them a new home. (Heb. 11:13) They can look forward to a new heavens and a new earth. Whether this new creation will be born out of the old as was the case with the flood or whether it will be an entirely new creation is not known.

- a) Righteousness will dwell in this new world. It will be a world that never knew and will never know sin. It will be a world of holiness and peace. It is in contrast to the world they knew, which was a world of sin and death, suitable only for God's purifying fire. (Isa. 65:17, 66:22; Rev. 21:1-7)
- b) Peter tells the believers of his day (as well as us through the scriptures) to anticipate the day of God; the day in which the world will be destroyed. Paul also describes the day in his letter to the Thessalonians with language similar to that of Peter. (1 Thes. 4:16- 5:3) He also adds the fact that believers will receive a new body. (1 Cor. 15:44, 50-53) Peter says nothing about a separate "rapture" of believers. But tells believers to look forward to the day when the earth will be destroyed.

***v.3:14 Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.***

Having reminded his readers of the end of their faith, namely, a new heavens and a new earth where they will dwell in righteousness, Peter once again exhorts them to holiness.

- a) He tells them that if they indeed believe that this will be their end, if they are looking for the day of God with great anticipation, then they should live according to that vision. Will their Master find them asleep when He returns or diligently performing their duties?
- b) The word "diligent" here means "to make every effort". With the coming of their Master they are to be found striving for peace and holiness in their lives. This goes back to the path of righteousness he exhorted them to follow at the beginning of this letter. He is again describing to them an "abundant entrance" into the kingdom of heaven. (v. 1:5-11)
- c) They are to be at peace with their God who has come to redeem them, at peace with others through the Spirit of God that resides within them, and with themselves through their faith. They are to make every effort to be without spot and blameless which is in direct contrast to the false teachers who are said to be spots and blemishes. (v. 2:13)

*"He who has such hopes set before him, should seek earnestly that he may be enabled truly to avail himself of them, and should make their attainment the great object of his life. He who is so soon to come to an end of all weary toil, should be willing to labor diligently and faithfully while life lasts.*

*He who is so soon to be relieved from all temptation and trial, should be willing to bear a little longer the sorrows of the present world.” Albert Barnes*

***v.3:15 And account [that] the longsuffering of our Lord [is] salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you;***

In summary. Peter again reminds his readers that the great patience displayed by God equates to salvation. Every hour that His impending judgment is not executed individuals are being saved. Every hour His impending judgment is not executed believers are being perfected.

- a) So God is not slack concerning His promised coming, but is manifesting His love, mercy, patience and longsuffering toward mankind (v. 3:9)
- b) Peter appeals to Paul whom he calls a beloved brother. He states that Paul concurs with him on these things, namely, the longsuffering of the Lord, the coming day of God, and the way believers are to respond to these truths.
- c) Paul had written to those to whom Peter addresses. Peter was familiar with these letters and is in agreement with their contents. Paul’s letters to the Ephesians, Galatians and Colossians were written to those of Asia Minor and could very well be the writings he refers to. Another possibility is that he refers to unpreserved letters of Paul written directly to the churches Peter is here addressing.

***v.3:16 As also in all [his] epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as [they do] also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.***

Peter confirms that he is very familiar with the writings of Paul. He refers to other letters not addressed to those to whom he writes that they may or may not be familiar with. He also, as a matter of fact, calls these writings scripture, meaning, that Peter considers them to be inerrant and infallible being inspired by God.

- a) He makes the statement that some of the things Paul writes are hard to understand. As Barnes puts it, “*He refers not to the difficulty of understanding what Paul meant, but to the difficulty of comprehending the great truths which he taught.*” In other words, Paul’s writings in some instances had to be studied and pondered to comprehend the fullness of the wisdom with which he wrote as well as the logic with which it was presented.
- b) The question in this passage is what exactly the phrase “these things” refers to. Was he talking about the subjects most recently covered, or seeing this is at the end of his letter, to all the subjects he had covered. Whatever the case may be, Paul covered all of the subjects Peter addressed in much greater detail. Everything from the truths of the gospel to the day of God.
- c) Peter again turns his attention to the false teachers who being ignorant and not grounded in the truth twist and distort the writings of Paul as well as all of God’s word. Instead of studying the scriptures and trying to ascertain the truth, they

instead provide their own meanings taking the scriptures out of context and using them to promote themselves. (2 Tim. 4:3-4)

- d) This is the path of destruction which Peter had described earlier. This would be the undoing of the false teachers. (v. 2:3)

***v.3:17 Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know [these things] before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.***

Peter makes one last appeal to his beloved readers to be on guard. He has warned them of the false teachers and their propensity to distort the scriptures. He tenderly tells them to beware. (Acts 20:26-36)

- a) They can be led away from the truth by the error propagated by the wicked. Peter knows deception is strong and peer pressure great from first hand experience. (Gal. 2:13-14) Many in Galatia had been led away from the truth. (Gal. 1:6) Peter pleads with them to stand strong in the truth.

***v.3:18 But grow in grace, and [in] the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him [be] glory both now and for ever. Amen***

Grace is unmerited favor. In this instance it is everything that God had provided for them in the way of spiritual gifts. It is the “all things that pertain unto life and godliness.” (v. 1:3)

- a) He closes by telling them to cultivate virtue in their lives, that is, to grow in the knowledge of their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This is how they themselves will be able to distinguish truth from error and to stand strong against the false teachers.
- b) Peter closes by giving all glory to the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He only is deserving of glory now and for all time.

Amen