

# Commentary on the Book of 2 Peter

## Chapter 1

### **1 Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ,**

Peter identifies himself as a bondservant and as an apostle. Apostle means “sent one,” which appears Biblically to have required a person to have seen the risen Christ and have been one of the twelve disciples of Christ (plus Paul). But notice that he is not an apostle of any man or any other idea or agenda. He is an apostle of Christ. Too often it is tempting to identify ourselves with people, hobbies, ministries, or connections rather than Christ. Peter sets a great example in boasting in his relationship with Christ.

Peter also identifies himself as a bondservant, which can be defined as one who has willingly chosen to be enslaved to Christ and His kingdom purposes. This meant that whenever there was a conflict of interests between him and God, God’s will always prevailed. His only aspiration and agenda was that Christ’s righteousness be clearly seen in and through His life.

If Peter had written a book, he would likely have written in the portion which identifies the author’s credibility that he was a bondservant of Christ and an apostle of Christ. Indeed, he did write a book, and indeed that is what he did write. His qualifications had nothing to do with letters after his name or how big his church was. It had to do with Christ and His glory and righteousness. It wasn’t about Peter’s glory but the Christ’s. Why should we listen to Peter? Because he was a fisherman? Because he was self-confident? No, but because he is a slave, a servant, and a messenger of Christ. That, not education, numerical success, or leadership prowess, is how a man of God ought to be evaluated.

### **To those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ:**

He writes to believers. Who else is fit to receive the teaching and instruction of the Lord? It is only those who are reborn and who have the capacity via the Holy Spirit to understand that which is spiritually appraised. It is not possible to disciple an unbeliever. One could preach the gospel to him and tell him of his sin and the need to repent, but discipleship is only possible for one who has professed faith in Christ.

He is writing to those who have received faith. They did not earn it, but rather they were given it. Faith is a free gift from God. They had received a faith that was the same as Peter’s and the apostles’. It was not a works-based faith or a faith in some other mediator other than Christ. It was faith that was based upon the righteousness of Jesus Christ imputed to them. This Jesus was also one and the same as God the Father. This should clearly rule out any who believed Jesus wasn’t God as having the same kind of faith. Jesus Christ is God and Savior, according to an eye witness of Jesus.

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

Peter begins by extending a gracious blessing. He says that grace and peace be multiplied to them. They already had the grace of God leading to salvation. They also had peace with God through Christ. But Peter is calling for grace upon grace (John 1:16) and a peace which surpasses comprehension. Peter knows that the life in the flesh needs grace. The process of sanctification, like salvation, requires grace. This is why we need more grace.

Isaiah 26:3 says that the one who keeps his mind fixed on God will be kept in perfect peace. The fact that Peter exhorts the believers to have more peace means their peace is not yet perfect. This by implication means that their minds are not fixed upon God as they ought. How to fix the problem? He continues by saying that it is furthered and increased by the knowledge of God and of Christ. Such knowledge will enable these Christians to live in perfect peace and to experience the overflowing grace of God. The more we know our God and Savior intimately, the more we will live in the reality of abounding grace and peace, among other realities such as joy and love. God promises in James 4:8 that if we draw near to Him He will draw near to us. As we seek Him, we will find Him. When we call to Him, He will answer when we seek with all of our hearts. He desires to reveal Himself to us, and we will do well to humble ourselves to receive what He has told us in His Word about Himself. May He show us His kindness, for it is His kindness that leads us to repentance, which will help us to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ.

## **3 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.**

There are some specific truths that Peter wants us to know; these in effect will be crucial in our growing in grace and increasing in peace. He wants us to recognize and remember that God's divine power is at work within us. In fact, it has granted us everything that we need in order to live a life honoring to God and one reflective of the character of Christ. Somebody may say that it is just too hard to live in a way honoring to God or to overcome a certain sin habit. Peter reminds us that we have by grace all that we need to resist temptation and live for Christ. God is faithful and will provide a way of escape in any temptation (1 Corinthians 10:13). The question for us is not are we strong enough to resist Satan (for left to ourselves we are not), but rather will we remember that Christ has granted to us all the resources of heaven that we need to walk in faith and truth. When God calls, there is no room for "I can't" or "it's too hard" for nothing is impossible with God. By the way, Peter wants us to remember where this power has come from. It is through the true knowledge of Christ who has called us by His glory and excellence. Any man who is saved has the resources of Christ's excellence and glory to be able to do what He says. We have this treasure of Christ's glory and righteousness encapsulated in our hearts where the glory and fullness of God in Christ dwells. It is a marvelous, majestic,

and miraculous truth: God within the believer. Do we have this knowledge to lean on when temptation comes? The resources are ours if we will receive them by faith.

**4For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.**

Through what are these promises granted us, these precious and magnificent promises? It is by His glory and excellence, not anything we can conjure up to impress God or earn His favor. Our ability to live for Christ is a gift from Him due to Christ's glory, excellence, and sacrifice. There is no room for us to boast about righteous living because it is Christ at work in us willing and doing according to His good pleasure. We are promised that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us (Philippians 4:13). We are told that God will supply all our needs through the riches that are in Christ (Philippians 4:19). We have all authority given to us to loose things on earth and bind (Matthew 16:19). We will judge angels (1 Corinthians 6:3). We will be eternally with God, with an inheritance promised to us. These are just a few of the magnificent promises of Christ to us. He says that He will complete the good work He started (Philippians 1:6). He authored our faith and He will perfect our faith (Hebrews 12:2). By these promises, which are founded in Christ's ability and not ours, we can rest assured that we have become partakers of the divine nature, if indeed we have trusted in Christ to indwell us by faith.

In Genesis 1 we were made in the image of God. We had characteristics that were reflective of the nature of God. Now we are told that we are part divine in nature. How is that possible for we know our human weakness and reality? It is because of Christ within us. To be Christ's is to eat His flesh and drink His blood (John 6). We partake of His very essence and being when we receive Him in faith. He must be our spiritual food to live a sanctified life. It is because of this newly created heart and self that Christ lives within us. There is no dark and evil dragon within us called our hearts. It is Christ! It is divine and eternal, God Himself within us. How amazing, how wonderful, how profound, that God who fills the universe and beyond would dwell within us! With such divine resources and power within us (not us, mind you, but within us), certainly we ought to be able to resist sin. Christ conquered death and sin once and for all. Death has no victory or sting. We are not enslaved any longer to sin that it should reign over us or in us (Romans 6:12). We, through Christ, have escaped the corruption that is in the world. The world system is marked by lust. Self-interest and pleasing fleshly desires and impulses is the mode of operation. The Christian is not marked by lust but by love (John 13:34-35). This is only possible because of Christ within us. The world does not love selflessly. They love because they want others to do the same for them or because it is the noble thing to do. Until we have freely received, how can we possibly freely give (Matthew 10:8)? Christ-like love is unique to the believer because only the believer can freely give, not merely with no expectation of getting anything in return but not even desiring it. It is Christ whom we serve, not ourselves or man. We serve for His glory, again something only which one who has partaken of the divine nature can do.

**5 Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge,**

**6 and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness,**

**7 and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love.**

“For this very reason” is a key transition phrase. The reason for living righteously as he is about to describe is found in the fact that we have Christ in us at work giving us all that we need to live a godly life. We have no excuse for wallowing in fleshly appetites and desires. We have the divine living within us with infinite grace and power to live righteously. Therefore, we are to diligently apply ourselves. We are to be diligent in good works, in studying the Word, and in resisting temptation, among other things. So character trait number one of a godly person is diligence. (We will begin to see how the contemporary church values a person is much different than God’s value system). This person is hard-working and not lazy, but devoted to wanting to know God and serve Him. Secondly, we are to add to this moral excellence. There is no point in being steadfast if we are not doing it in a God-honoring way. This (like any and all of the characteristics) is added, that is, put on, and supplied by faith. To continue in our growth we must learn. If we are living unrighteously, we will be drawn to worldly counterfeits of divine knowledge. All these counterfeits can be identified by their source of power. It is either built upon developing self into a god, or in letting Christ within us work to destroy self. This grid will let us see what godly knowledge is and what worldly knowledge is. The good news is that God’s Word has no counterfeit or worldly knowledge. The Bible ought to be our source of knowledge, even if it is the only source.

The tricky thing is that knowledge makes us arrogant because we think we know as God knows, which we do not. So to our knowledge we must add self-control, which is a gift of the Holy Spirit, not a product of self-effort or self-management. We must be extra sensitive and cued in to the leading and prompting of the Spirit to know when we are walking down the slippery slope of pride. This is an ongoing battle for the one who values knowledge. Thus self-control must be put on with perseverance. In a weak moment Satan will pounce and deceive us into pride. Pride is the archenemy of godliness, so we must be persistent in listening to God and His Spirit. This consistency and persevering under trial brings proven character (Rom 5:4). Proven character is godliness, which is the next trait listed. Scripture has this theme over and over that we must persevere under trial and resist Satan to have our character strengthened and sharpened. That is why we can welcome trial and suffering with joy knowing that it will make us more like Christ as we submit to His power in faith.

A godly person who keeps his godliness to himself is not a true reflection of God. God desires relationships with others. His holiness is foundational to being able to love. Peter in his first letter had told us that we can fervently love the brethren only after we have purified our lives. This is why godliness comes before love. We cannot truly love with a selfless and pure agenda if we are impure within. But a truly godly person is able to love others and must desire to love others. The crowning virtue is not just brotherly kindness, where we love those within the church and family, but love which is impartial toward all

men, initiating love and sacrifice with no self-interest whatsoever. This is why the greatest virtue in 1 Corinthians 13 is love. It is why love fulfills the law. Love is the culmination of the character of God, for He is not just a God who loves but a God who is love. If we are to be partakers of the divine nature, we need to let Christ teach us to love as He loved. God is love, Christ is love, and so we too must be love.

**If these qualities are ours and are increasing, they render us neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

True knowledge and true fruit is success spiritually. We are to evaluate the character of an individual based upon the characteristics we just mentioned, such as godliness, perseverance, self-control, moral excellence, and love. This matters because it is only people who have these qualities and have them in increasing fashion that God promises will be fruitful in ministry. If these characteristics are lacking, the appearance of success and popular acclaim might be attained, but God calls such “success” useless and unfruitful. If we live according to Peter’s list of godly characteristics, we will be operating in a way conformed to the true knowledge of Christ and to His design for worship and service. To live in sin or to glorify self means that we will quickly fall off course and not operate according to the divine order.

We must remember that nobody ever arrives at perfection until they are with Christ in heaven. Godliness and moral excellence and love must all be increasing each and every day of our lives. This is sanctification. It is through Christ in us. We all are works in progress and we all have a ways to go. But we all ought to be moving forward to becoming conformed to the fullness of the stature of Christ.

**9For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins.**

Here those who do not have these characteristics or whose characteristics are not increasing are indicted. They are said to be either blind or short-sighted. The Christian is not blind, for we have the light that enlightens that is Christ and God’s Word, which is a light to our path. So if a person is lacking the godly characteristics that Peter has given, we have reason to conclude that they may not be of the faith. The exhortation would be that they examine themselves to see if they are of the faith. Many in our country, especially in younger generations, profess Christ and deny Him daily and regularly by their lifestyle. What they watch and what they listen to, how they speak and how they dress, all testify to Satan rather than to God. The gospel message we have taught our children about receiving or accepting Christ leaves out repentance which Christ says is required for entrance into the kingdom (Luke 13:5).

If the person is not found to be blind (i.e. without saving faith) then they must be short-sighted. This means that they have forgotten that they were saved and purified from their former lifestyle and sinful ways prior to salvation. They are more interested in the here and now and. They continue to name the name of Christ, and yet live as if they are oblivious to their new life in Christ. This is to risk judgment from God leading to

sickness and even death (1 Corinthians 11:30). To live in a short-sighted manner is to chase others from the heart of God and to blaspheme the sacrifice of Christ, something God takes very seriously. Eternal rewards and honor in the kingdom is not something we ought to wager. Clearly, some can be last in the kingdom. Such a lifestyle is to chase temporal pleasure rather than waiting for eternity and storing up treasure in heaven which will last. Such a person has lost his first love of Christ and exchanged Him for something lesser that does not satisfy. He is living a double-minded lifestyle which makes him unstable, often giving in to sin and wavering frequently between spiritual “highs” and “lows.” He needs to be revived and called back to purity in Christ.

**10Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; 11for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.**

**12Therefore, I will always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you already know them, and have been established in the truth which is present with you.**

These verses are absolutely fascinating to me. Peter tells us to exercise the diligence that we have in Christ to come to a place of certainty that we are in fact Christ's. We are commanded to come to a place of certainty over the fact that we are saved. If God indeed called us and chose us, then we had better live like it. Again, the exhortation is to examine ourselves to be sure we are of the faith. So many Christians do not know for sure if they are saved. Peter says one way to know is if the godly characteristics are ours and increasing. If we are living this way, we will never stumble. The person living in the power of Christ will only stumble if he chooses to go outside of it. Such a decision is made either because of being deceived or because of rebellion to sin. But it is not something we are forced to do. If we are constantly by faith cultivating moral excellence, godliness, love, and so on, this is a road that leads to fruitfulness to Christ, not a stumbling down a path of error and unfruitfulness. We only stumble when we refuse to lay aside every sin or distraction that might entangle or enslave us. We will have not walked in moral excellence, and we will have made ourselves vulnerable. This doesn't have to happen. Living consistently and persistently for Christ will make it so that we will be told “Well done, good and faithful servant.” We will have eternal rewards to show for our labor rather than making it in to heaven though as through fire (1 Corinthians 3:15) with nothing to pass the judgment but our own soul. We will have done nothing for Christ that will last. We do not want to shrink back in shame at the coming of Christ (1 John 2:28). We want rather to be found by Him spotless (2 Peter 3:14).

Peter doesn't want entrance into heaven to be up for grabs or iffy. This is to be a matter of certainty. This is why he tries to remind the believers about how they can know. They have the truth, it is present in them, and therefore it should be reflected in godly and holy living.

**13I consider it right, as long as I am in this earthly dwelling, to stir you up by way of reminder,**

**14** knowing that the laying aside of my earthly dwelling is imminent, as also our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me.

**15** And I will also be diligent that at any time after my departure you will be able to call these things to mind.

As long as Peter was still alive on earth he felt burdened to make sure the believers under his care were diligent in cultivating godliness and love. Holiness of living was a major theme for Peter. He wanted believers to be cognizant of the importance of holiness even after he was dead and buried. Perhaps true success of pastoral ministry is seen here. Even after the pastor is gone to heaven, his sheep will still be able to remember the major exhortations from the pulpit. The sheep will be diligent to live lifestyles of holiness. How minimized is this reality? Holiness is a secondary issue compared to "fruitfulness." Dealing with a few reigning sin issues is no big deal as long as the person is bringing people into the church. Peter's message that he wants his people to remember after he is taken to heaven is godliness is what matters. They are to cultivate godliness. If we knew our time to go home to be with the Lord was imminent like Peter did, what would we be telling those under our care and influence? If Peter's testimony means anything, we ought to be exhorting people to holiness and love, for they are mutually exclusive. We can't have one without the other.

**16** For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty.

**17** For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, "This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased"--

**18** and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.

The things that he speaks of in this book are not some fictitious musings from an overactive imagination or from an overzealous need to write a letter about religion. Neither are these words one option among many. They cannot be said to be merely valid or containing some elements of truth. They must be understood as divine revelation. When Peter witnessed of Christ's resurrection to those to whom he now writes, he spoke with power and authority because he himself had seen personally the majesty of Christ. He specifically refers to the transfiguration on the mountain, when Christ appeared with Moses and Elijah. God's voice thundered from heaven, rebuking Peter for not listening and pausing to worship. It truly was a moment to bow before majesty, a moment that Peter would never forget. He was an eyewitness to God the Father, the Majestic Glory, showcasing the majesty of His Son. Jesus got to hear the words that we all want to hear when God evaluates our lives: well-done, good and faithful servant. Jesus had pleased the Father. The amazing thing is that He is only the firstborn among many, we being the rest and the fullness. We, too, are His beloved sons and daughters. This is an amazing thought. Think of the honor and glory it was to Christ to be given such a commendation by the Father. To think that we will one day share in this honor and glory because we are the Son's prized possession is wonderful. I have no

doubt that Jesus and the Father will be the center of our attention on that day, totally and fully satisfying and consuming us with joy and worship, awe and reverence. I can't imagine what it would be like to, like Peter, know that I have heard both the Son's voice and the Father's voice. He truly is one we ought to listen to. He has been with the Source of truth. He has heard the very voice of Him who came to earth to die for our sins. That is a voice we need to heed.

**19**So we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts.

We have the revealed, spoken Word of God, and we have it with certainty. There is no doubt that when we read the Word of God that it is indeed the transcribed voice of God Himself. Since this is the case, we would do well to pay attention to whatever it says. The Word is a lamp that exposes the darkness, brings light to the truth, and supplies hope to the weak. Jesus was the light that lighteth every man. His Word and presence illuminated human history and ultimate reality. The prophecies of the Old Testament suddenly connected and made sense to our feeble minds. His Word is effective to take a dead, dark heart and made it bright and alive so that it shines with other believers as a city on a hill which cannot be hidden. When the Holy Spirit calls to a dark heart and that heart responds in faith, Jesus Himself takes up residence in that heart. The Morning Star Himself shines brightly. Oh what a day it will be in the new heaven and new earth when Christ Himself is the light and we have no more need for the sun. Why have created light when we can have the Creator's Light? One can only imagine and long for such a day. We will then understand fully what now is a mystery. We will then see Christ face to face.

**20**But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation,

**21**for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

Peter pauses for emphasis because this point is crucial. We must know this truth. It must be axiomatic, a fundamental, and a clinging point. First of all, above all else, we must know that every utterance of the Scriptures is given by God as the Holy Spirit moved men to write what God wanted and nothing else. It wasn't of human volition or from a person agenda or ambition. Peter didn't sit down and decide to write a nice letter to his brothers and sisters in Christ. The Holy Spirit prompted him, moved him, inspired him, enabled him, and worked in and through him to do a work that he could not have done on his own. Because God wrote through these men what God wanted, we can be sure that what is written is not some human interpretation. Rather it is divine and perfect. It is not a commentary from Peter which is fallible (as this one is), but it is perfect and infallible from God Himself. Scripture has an intended meaning. It is not up for a variety of opinions and interpretations. Granted, some parts are difficult, and we will have to wait until Jesus helps us to understand them on the other side of the grave. But the emphasis is that we had better be very careful when we handle God's Word, teaching it, preaching it,



commentating on it, and paraphrasing it. To distort God's Word is a serious offense because it is putting words in God's mouth that He didn't intend. We must approach God's Word with reverence and care. Finally, let us note that Peter is saying this as one who experienced being inspired by the Holy Spirit. He is the one saying that this was not my thing. God did it. On that ground, we had better listen.

## Chapter 2

**1But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.**

Having emphasized the intentionality of God in giving us His very thoughts and words with precision, Peter reminds us that those will come who will distort the truth of God's Word. They were present in Peter's time, and they are more present today (2 Timothy 3:13). As time wears on, things go from purity to filth, and from order to disorder. There are so many distortions, cults, and deceptions out there, many of which have waged war against the persevering church of God. In the time of the Old Testament, God spoke through prophets, and prophets had to be tested. They were tested based upon whether what they said followed what was already revealed and if their future predictions came true. In the same way, these deceivers will come after the church, and the church must put their words to the test, as Peter will explain shortly.

Peter gives their method: secrecy. They bring in that which is heretical, destructive, and against God's Word in some way with the necessary result of harm. It is secret in that they disguise themselves as those among us. They are wolves in sheep's clothing. They attend the Christian bookseller's conventions, they lead nationwide ministries, and they sit next to us at church. They are difficult to pick out unless one knows what to look for. It is simple to tell that an atheist is heretical. It is much harder to tell that a Bible professor or Sunday School teacher is sowing seeds of destruction. Preachers can be eloquent, using and misusing God's Word to say what they want it to say. We must be innocent as doves yet shrewd as serpents so we do not get taken advantage of. Some will go so far as to deny that Jesus is the Son of God and the Messiah who came to die for the sins of the world. Others will not go that far; yet they will distort the gospel in some other more subtle way. Yet the end is the same for all. They will all be destroyed. They may be found out, their lies pointed out, or destroyed by listening to their own deception. Typically, their fall is the discovery of secret sins. Once they are discovered, the destruction is swift. Should they deny Christ, that destruction will be a swift entrance into hell upon judgment.

**2Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned;**

**3and in their greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.**

Sometimes it is difficult to sort through the words and logic of a crafty false teacher. They will sound right, but something in our spirit will like say that something doesn't ring true. The interesting thing is that, though it is extremely important to identify the false teaching, a false teacher can be identified apart from the teaching itself. Many times a false teacher will draw crowds, often times huge followings leading many, many souls astray. Those who are vulnerable are naive or foolish souls, and they are led away into a sensuality like their teacher. Their focus will become what something or somebody can do for them to give them what they want, all couched in spiritual lingo. But because these people are disguised as sheep, the way of the truth of Christ and His church will be spoken poorly of because of the poor testimony of the many who go astray using Jesus' name to justify sensuality and corrupt living and practices.

Sensuality is the first test for behavior. The second is greed. They will exploit the needy and weak, stealing from the poor who need their money most. They will take mercilessly and benefit from those who are desperate. Their words are false. Their promises void. The good news is that God is not blind to this ravenous behavior. Their judgment is fast approaching and will be meted out perfectly and fairly. They will not get away with their schemes before God.

**4For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment;**

**5and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly;**

**6and if He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly lives thereafter;**

**7and if He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men**

**8(for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day by their lawless deeds),**

**9then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment,**

Peter here gives a list of reasons for why we can be confident that the false teachers will get their just due. When the angels fell with Lucifer they were sentenced to hell, to the pits of darkness, reserved for judgment. They are already in the waiting room to be sentenced. It is a done deal. It will happen. The demons will be eternally punished in the lake of fire for their sin. God also destroyed the entire world with a flood except for Noah and his family. God reduced Sodom and Gomorrah to ash heaps because of their sin as an example again for our confidence that God's wrath will be meted out. Lot, who had his own faults, was even tormented by the outrageous sin of the people in Sodom and Gomorrah. But God is faithful and provides a way out of temptation if we walk in faith in Him. He can indeed keep us from temptation and deliver us from evil. But the unrighteous have no such hope or promise. Their destiny is sure. They are kept under punishment for the day of judgment. Just like the demons in their waiting room for

execution, so too are the false teachers. Our souls ought to be tormented like Lot's was when we see all of the immorality around us. Yet we have hope that justice will be served, and God will execute His vengeance.

**10and especially those who indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires and despise authority. Daring, self-willed, they do not tremble when they revile angelic majesties,**

**11whereas angels who are greater in might and power do not bring a reviling judgment against them before the Lord.**

Now Peter gets very graphic in describing how God sees these people. Their behavior in addition to their words is how we can identify them. A third characteristic is that they indulge the flesh. This is very similar to the sensuality, except this carries the idea that they have a reckless mentality in their indulging and sinning, not sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit whatsoever. There is a callousness and hardness about them clothed in arrogance. Their arrogance is revealed in the fact that they despise authority. They do not heed Peter's first epistle in the importance of submission and respect for authority. The false teacher will speak behind the back of the authority, demean them, ridicule them, and talk as if they could do so much better than the authority. It is all done in an arrogant, haughty fashion.

The person has yet another characteristic. They are daring and self-willed. There is no trembling before God or His messengers and warriors, the angels. That God is sovereign and working in the world is a non-issue for the false teacher. He thinks that he is in charge of his own destiny. He takes chances, acts on his own initiative, and does not seek or listen to counsel. Rather, he acts impulsively according to his fleshly desires. The angels could easily judge these people and wipe them out. Yet they fear God and tremble before Him, waiting for His perfect timing and not acting on their own impulses. The false teacher thinks he is so wonderful and powerful, and he forgets that there are angels all around him who could take him out with a single swipe. There is no fear of God in the false teacher's heart. Many of these characteristics are unidentifiable when the person is in the public eye. They take on the persona of dignified, calm, collected, careful, humble, and so on. It is when they are in private that the comments will come out, and the actions and sensuality will be seen. In such cases, the fellow sheep must analyze with divine discernment the words of the teacher. But typically is it issues of integrity and character that will reveal the wolves in sheep's clothing.

**12But these, like unreasoning animals, born as creatures of instinct to be captured and killed, reviling where they have no knowledge, will in the destruction of those creatures also be destroyed, 13suffering wrong as the wages of doing wrong.**

The false teacher is like an animal that follow its instincts for food, reproduction, water, and shelter in that it uses base instincts as its compass to navigate life. If something can bring them more money, power, sex, or whatever their pet sin is, they will do it. It is their instinct. They mock and revile things that they don't know anything about. Experts on everything, they have a word of criticism for everybody. Only they are exempt. They

might acknowledge their general humanness as a weakness, but even their sin is a reason for them to gloat because it reminds them of another fleshly impulse satisfied. They will meet their ultimate end of destruction. Proverbs 26:27 tells us that he who digs a pit for his neighbor will fall into it himself. This is the ultimate end of the false teacher, whether in this life or the next.

**They count it a pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are stains and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, as they carouse with you,**

**14having eyes full of adultery that never cease from sin, enticing unstable souls, having a heart trained in greed, accursed children;**

**15forsaking the right way, they have gone astray, having followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;**

**16but he received a rebuke for his own transgression, for a mute donkey, speaking with a voice of a man, restrained the madness of the prophet.**

During the daytime, when we are supposed to work, strive, and labor, these folks revel in their sin and in the fruit of their exploitations. God sees them as stains and blemishes which take joy in their success as deceiving and taking advantage of the weak. They are spiritually ugly and defiling, especially if other believers let them carouse with them. This doesn't mean only that an outright sinful outburst has to happen with drunkenness and all that comes with it, but that even a close association with the false teacher will allow them to take further advantage of the weak. Just being around such a corrupt person has a corrupting influence that may be imperceptible to the person being corrupted and to those watching what is happening.

The eyes of the false teacher will be full of adultery and illicit sexual desire for those who associate with them. They may be speaking Biblical counsel from their mouth while their mind thinks about abominations. Indeed, their eyes wander to and fro, always pursuing and seeking another opportunity to sin. Appeasing the flesh is their instinct, their passion, and their driving purpose to life.

Peter emphasizes that those who get taken advantage of are weak. They are unstable souls, either unsure of the truth of their faith or lacking the confidence that comes from an abiding walk in the loving arms of Christ. Satan takes advantage of the lust of the flesh, but he also captures mercilessly the feeble and downtrodden. We need to pay attention when we have been hurt deeply or when we are really struggling. This is why the younger among us are more vulnerable to being taken advantage of. They just don't have some of the wisdom of the years. Those who are new to the faith and those who do not know the Scriptures well are especially vulnerable.

The false teacher has a heart trained in greed, not in the ways of God. Life is about what they can get, not give. They are about the destruction of others and the advancement of themselves. They are cursed by God Himself, waiting for the day of their judgment. They knew the truth, but they forsook it. This is why a lot of the really perverted folks out there have a childhood that connects somehow with a Christian church, family, or person. They heard it, rejected it, and now live blatantly against it. In order to fool the sheep, they need

to have been around them for awhile. The false teacher is a masquerader and an accursed child. They are not described by Peter as believers, though it is possible for believers to be deceived and take others down the wrong road with them. They are described rather as children of the devil, or children of doom and of the curse. Their doom is sure. They are like the corrupt prophet Balaam (who was not a believer) who tried to curse Israel for his own gain. They are false and are fighting for Satan's side and not the Lord's. The right way, the way of righteousness and truth, and the way of salvation and life eternal with Christ they have forsaken. They have done so because they love what their unrighteous gain provides them. There is a level of satiation that comes from fulfilling the desires of the flesh, though true satisfaction comes only in Christ. They have chosen the pleasures of sin which last but for awhile. Balaam thought he was a serious player and power broker, and God rebuked him through the mouthpiece of a donkey, the humblest animal of all. That was to show Balaam where he really stood before God. The same is true of the arrogant false teacher.

These types of folks tend to gather where the shepherd is weak, insecure, and vulnerable. They sneak in where they can take advantage of the welfare of kind but undiscerning people. Where the true revelation of God is not taught in fullness and power, the people will decay spiritually, much due to false teachers taking them astray.

What is a false teaching? A false teaching is anything that claims to have power and a solution apart from Christ, for only in Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Colossians 2:3). Anything that claims new revelation or attempts to alter the deity or nature of Christ or His Word must be declared anathema, that is, cursed.

**17 These are springs without water and mists driven by a storm, for whom the black darkness has been reserved.**

**18 For speaking out arrogant words of vanity they entice by fleshly desires, by sensuality, those who barely escape from the ones who live in error,**

The false teacher is like the storm clouds that build and send down the cool air from above but never bring the promised and needed rain. They are, as one might say, blowing smoke. Their bold and arrogant claims about what God will do for His people are unfounded and abused. The needy come to the teacher for advice and hope and what they are given is cool air, a false hope and security, but never the genuine healing of the rain of Christ. It is like coming to a spring of water where thirst is supposed to be quenched and finding it empty. That is why only Jesus and the truth of His Word can truly satisfy, set free, and give the water that will make us to never thirst again. In Christ's design, we may thirst in our mouth but never in our soul. In the design of the false teacher, we will never thirst in our mouths (though the promise is for soul rest) but forever in our souls.

Peter then sums up the nature of the false teacher so that they can be identified. They speak arrogant words that have no Biblical basis and do not come true. They make promises that sound so grand and wonderful, but God has not given them. They appeal to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. They tell the weak that they will be healed, receive riches, become powerful, live longer, or speak with a dead family

member, and so on. All appeals are made to the flesh, that which seeks by way of self-interest and not with the mind of Christ. They use sensuality, trying to persuade by a good image or expensive designer clothes. Their target sheep of choice is the weak one, the one who has barely escaped from those doomed to hell. This person might lack adequate foundation of knowledge, they are susceptible to pride, and they may have a lot of baggage yet from their life without Christ. There are many grab-on points for Satan and the false teachers.

**19promising them freedom while they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved.**

**20For 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.**

**21For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment handed on to them.**

**22It has happened to them according to the true proverb, "A DOG RETURNS TO ITS OWN VOMIT," and, "A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire."**

They promise freedom from the difficulties of life couched in some misused but wonderfully stated Biblical truth when the reality is that Christ is not in them or behind their words. Indeed, they are not free themselves because they are bound to the sin that controls them. They are helpless, forced to do the bidding of their own flesh, because they have not yielded to the power of Christ. The final verse in this section makes the passage understandable, otherwise it would be unclear if Peter is asserting that in having the knowledge of Jesus Christ that the false teacher is genuinely saved. It says that the pig returns to its "pigness" and the dog to its "dogness." They, by nature, like the mud and the vomit. They roll around in filth and feed upon unrighteousness. That is their nature. As we read earlier, like animals they operate by instinct. The instinct of the one outside of Christ is to pursue sin. It is the nature of such a one. The Christian has a new nature desiring truth and Christ, though he sometimes chooses to indulge his flesh. He is controlled not by sin but by love. The false teacher is like one of the seeds sowed by the sower that gets stomped on the ground or eaten by the birds. The knowledge which they received never took root. There are many who have heard the gospel but who have not truly received it. These folks know the routine about who Jesus is, but they have rejected it and denied it. That is why they are so good at deceiving the sheep; they know the truth but the truth never set them free. At some point in their life they may have made some resolutions and decisions to do good, but not yielding to the power of Christ they were overcome by the sin which so easily entangled them. This situation is far worse for them because they will do much more damage to the sheep because of their ability to deceive. If they had never known the truth, their assertions would likely be so far from the truth that their trickery would be easier to identify. Their judgment before Christ will be more severe because they will lead so many more astray. The second reason that it is worse for them is that it will be significantly harder for them to come to a place of true repentance and brokenness. They might seek it with tears at some point, but never get it because their heart has been so corrupted that it seems compelled to continue to feast on

fleshly desires. Plus, they have the disappointment that their dabbling in truth didn't fix them and help them as they wanted, so they will be hardpressed to try again. It is the nature of man to be stubborn and unable to fix himself, especially if he has already tried and failed or been disappointed.

### Chapter 3

**1This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you in which I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder,**

**2that you should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles.**

Peter is affirming the inspiration and value in the Old Testament and New Testament. He, like he did in 1 Peter, is reminding the Christians to hold to the truth with all sincerity. Despite any hardship, they must continue to press forward in holiness, being sober in spirit and attentive and alert mentally. They are to remember the Word of God as given by the Old Testament prophets and by the teaching of Christ and His apostles. This is why we must seek to know and understand the Bible from cover to cover. It is one whole conclusive work, with themes and storylines that only fully make sense when we know the rest of the story. Concerning the false teachers, the best way to counter their effects is to be sure that his brothers and sisters know and remember the Word of God. It is one thing to hear and another to do. Remembering speaks to reflecting upon it, applying it, meditating upon it, and calling it to mind in the situations and decisions of life. We cannot do this unless we know it, and likely we will not know it well unless we have been taught it. The Word doesn't go forth void, but it must go forth in order to do its work.

**3Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts,**

**4and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation."**

**5For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water,**

**6through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water.**

Now Peter takes to telling us some important truths that he knows by way of the Holy Spirit that Christians, especially those who will live in the end times, need to know. Those he wrote to immediately did not live in the last days. We are closer than any before us. The exciting thing is that the Holy Spirit gave Peter these truths knowing that we and all who will come after us would need to know them. God's Word is indeed inherently relevant because God thinks outside of time and knows everything that will happen before it happens. His Word covers all of human history from beginning to end, from creation to the new creation, for Christ Himself is the beginning and the end.

So that we don't fall for any false teaching, Peter tells us that many will try to discourage us by mocking us for the delay in the coming of Christ. This is a major belief of

Christianity, and yet it is a temptation even for Christians to go astray thinking that they will have time to get it together later in life. The unbelievers go after all the sin that they can get their hands on and make fun of the Christians for staying pure and waiting for the return of Christ. They claim nothing has changed since creation, though many wouldn't use that word anymore. They would speak of a beginning, but the principle is still the same. In fact, it is worsened. The current secular belief is that the universe is billions of years old. So things have always been and always will be and Jesus never will come because He never created to start with. The mocking has indeed gotten more and more severe that it has taken on the form of outright denial of the reality that is presented right in front of our face of the reality of a Creator in the creation. The awesome thing about God is that He knew this would happen.

The next verse speaks of how the truth that God spoke the world into existence has escaped their notice. That is a very kind way of saying that they have been blinded and chosen to deny the truth. They can't see what is right in front of their faces, and they mock the Christians for believing what to us is downright obvious and elementary. When God created the world, He created the world out of water by separating water from dry land and giving it its boundaries. When God flooded the earth, the water reshaped the earth into its present form. But God promised to never use water to flood the earth as a means of destruction for sin.

**7But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.**

**8But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day.**

**9The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. God's Word sustains the world in its present state, and it was His Word which was used to create it. The present heavens and earth are reserved for judgment and destruction of the wicked, and this time it will not be water but fire. So we know for sure that God will keep His promise to send Christ to us again as conqueror and ruler. We know that judgment will happen, just as it has in earlier recorded history.**

We are also given an insight into the heart of God to see why things seem to be taking so long. We realize that God's timetable is so different from ours. "Short," "long," and "wait" are time-based words that don't apply to God who exists outside of them. God's time frame is not exactly one thousand years multiplied by one of our years. The point of this statement is that His time system is just different from ours. It may seem like Jesus is tarrying too long, but God knows exactly what "too long" would be. And we must go according to His watch. He knows when Jesus will return, though Jesus Himself doesn't even know. Jesus is waiting for the word from God to bring the next time period into existence.

We see that God is patient and merciful, giving people the time and opportunity to respond to Him in faith. With the way the world's population has increased in recent



centuries by an exponential factor, we see just how much God loves people because so many more will be entering His kingdom. Many more also choose to reject Him and secure their place in hell. But God is merciful, not wanting even those to perish. The fascinating thing about this verse is that the patience of God is not directed to the lost but to the saved. He is patient toward the believers because He doesn't want any of the lost to perish. That means that we as believers have work to do. It means that He is trusting us to go after that which is lost. We often think that His patience is buying the unsaved person time to repent. It is more true to say that God is giving us time to do our part to guide them into repentance. After all, the unsaved are lost, blind, and captives of the devil, and no one will hear unless preachers are sent. God is giving us time to go and tell the world. Next time somebody mocks us because Jesus hasn't shown up yet, we can tell them why He hasn't shown up yet. Jesus' purpose in tarrying is so that we can tell them the gospel. And may we do just that.

**10But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.**

The day of the Lord is the time when Christ comes to render His judgment and pour out His wrath upon the earth. It will come like a thief because the world has been lulled to sleep into ignorance and unbelief regarding the truth. They are so evil and so blinded that when prophecy begins to be fulfilled, they will just scoff and ignore it. God will rob them of their security and pleasure, and they will soon face His sentencing to hell. We know from Revelation 21 and Isaiah 65:17 that a new heavens and a new earth will be created. The old earth which has been marred by sin and the curse will have almost been destroyed during the tribulation. God allows it to be destroyed with intense heat. Some contemporary preachers assert that the word for destroyed means merely to refine with the heat. This is not the case. The word means to dissolve, to break apart, to destroy, and to loose. The translation is accurate. As we know, Christ holds all things together (Colossians 1:17), so perhaps He lets all things dissolve in some way. Either way, what was there was gone, and something brand new will have arrived. The earth and its works and all the fallenness and marring of the works of Satan and sin will be burned up. They are to be no more. God is doing something new.

**11Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,**

**12looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!**

**13But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.**

Never is prophecy irrelevant. It can be difficult to sort through, but it must be labored through. This is because how we view what will come impacts how we live now. Peter says that in light of the fact that all the earthly things will perish, we ought to be holy in our conduct and life. In other words, we can be sure that there will come an end to all the

here and now. We can fill up our barns and basements with all kinds of earthly treasures, but they will burn. Only what is done for Christ will last. In light of this reality, we had better invest in the things that will endure the fiery test before the judgment seat of Christ, for it will make clear what was done for Christ and what was not. We ought to watch the times, though without getting preoccupied with it. We ought to be looking forward to and desiring earnestly that the day of the Lord come. The word translated “hastening” also means to desire earnestly. I don’t know that we can make God hurry, but we can eagerly await His return as servants ready to be invited to the feast. We are to be alert, on guard, and at the watch. We want to be prepared at the coming of Christ so that we don’t shrink away in shame.

We learn that the heavens also will be destroyed by intense heat. This only makes sense seeing that a new heaven and a new earth will be created. Thus, the old must pass away before the new can come. The horror that must precede the return of Christ will be like nothing before it. Yet we have much to look forward to in the coming of Christ who will set up His millennial kingdom, bind Satan, and eventually create a new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness is found. All the enemies of Christ will have been subjected to Him and to the Father (1 Corinthians 15:25). All will be well.

**14Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless,**

**15and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you,**

**16as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.**

Peter admonished those he loves to again be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless. This is a fascinating phrase that we are to be “found by Him.” In other words, the condition in which we are found at the moment of Christ’s return seems to have some implication in regard to eternal rewards and the judgment seat of Christ. As 1 John 2:28 says, “Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming.” This is particularly an unnerving truth, especially for those with unconfessed sin. Of course we are declared holy and righteous before God at the point of salvation. Yet we are to keep short accounts with God because of sin that has yet to be dealt with in our process of sanctification. The exhortation here in light of the return of Christ is that we purify ourselves as He Himself is pure (1 John 3:3). We want to be found by Him in a state of purity before Him. Will it impact our entrance into the kingdom if we do not purify ourselves? I don’t believe so, but I do believe that it will impact how honored we are in the kingdom. Clearly, some are great and some are last (Matthew 18:4). We ought to all want to be great in God’s kingdom, but we must make ourselves last now, being servants of all.

**17**You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness,

**18**but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

Speaking further to his beloved brothers and sisters, he exhorts them to not fall from the steadfastness which to which they have been so faithful. This alarms me in light of the present Christian situation in the western world in particular. Grace has been allowed to excuse the idea of being mature in Christ and steadfast in holiness. This was never God's intention. We need to be mindful of what is yet to come, not only looking back to the cross. Perhaps, we forget the part of the gospel that says that Jesus was raised again and sits at the right hand of God reigning. There is a future hope that arises from the gospel: we will be raised with Him. In light of this, we ought to purify our hearts always, including when we are at the Lord's table. Peter has given us the head's up. We know how the story will end. In light of this, we ought not to be caught off guard. There should be no thief in the night to carry us astray. Yet, if we do not guard our minds and heart and persevere under trial, we can be carried away by the error of unprincipled men. This is why we are to put out from our fellowship those who profess Christ but don't walk in the Spirit. We can't afford any association or influence that will compromise our own steadfastness. We can witness to those outside of Christ, but we must avoid those who profess Christ and continue in sin.

Rather than fall into sin, we are to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus, who is both our Lord and our Savior. There doesn't seem to be any separating the two Biblically. We must repent and serve Christ in order to be saved, so He must be our Lord by default, whether we understand that fully or not at the time. Regardless, He is to be our Master and the Lord of our lives as children of God. Our lives are to be living sacrifices that showcase that we have been redeemed, a testimony of honor and glory to God.

God alone deserves the glory. He will share it with no other. Even our glory is His glory for we are His body. Glory will be to Him now and until eternity "begins." Amen.

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