

A
Doctrinal and Devotional
Commentary
On the
Second Epistle of
Peter

Written by Rénaud Leroux Jr.

INFO PAGE

A Doctrinal and Devotional Commentary of the Second Epistle of Peter.
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Introduction to the Second Epistle of Peter

This epistle includes no historical or geographical setting and historically it has been at the center of many controversies over its authenticity and authorship. Peter warns his readers against corruption and heretics. The tone of this epistle is severe but there is a sense of triumph when the messiah will come again.

As for the authorship, the early church fathers manifested doubt in regards to its author (more than any other writing actually). The two problems are the following. The style of writing differs greatly from the first to the second epistle. There is also the lack of mentions or quotations from the early fathers of the church. By the fourth century it seems that 2nd Peter was largely accepted.

The date of this epistle must be set between Peter's first letter and his death. It is believed that Peter died under the leadership of Nero's persecution (64-68 a.d.). Since there is no mention of the destruction of Jerusalem (70 a.d.) we can be fairly certain that it was written near 67-68 a.d..

As for the place of origin, Christian tradition says that Peter wrote this epistle while he was imprisoned in Rome, but there is no actual proof of this. Many catacombs have been discovered under or near the city of Rome and it is possible that if Peter died under Nero that he might have been buried in one of them.

The destination of this letter was for Christian believers who were suffering mostly because of their faith. It seems that both first and second Peter have the same audience. In his first letter we see that it was written *'To the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, (NKJV)*. There is nothing in Peter's second letter that indicates any change to whom he is writing.

The purpose of this epistle is to warn, reassure and teach the churches of the spiritual dangers that surround them. This letter does not evangelize its readers but rather pursues their edification. It seeks to reassure the believers who live in great times of tribulation. Peter writes that the purpose of his letter was to remind them of important truths: *'Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you,' – 2 Peter 1:13 (NKJV)*.

2nd Peter
01 – Greetings
1:1-4

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

To those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ: ² Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; 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. ⁴ For 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.

(NASB)

Peter is increasingly concerned about false teachers and scoffers who infiltrate one way or another into the already persecuted churches. This second letter of Peter can be read as if it was his spiritual legacy or testament if you prefer.

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

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

It begins with his name *Simon Peter* – these two names reflect the life of Peter. The first is his name given by his parents, Simon. This name means: That hears or that obeys. This speaks of his life before he met Christ. The second is the name Jesus gave him which was Peter (Cephas in Aramaic) meaning; rock or stone. Cephas is translated Peter in Greek. Sometimes in the gospels you will see that he is called either Peter or Simon or Simon-Peter or Cephas. This is the same person that we generally call Peter. It is in the gospel of John that Jesus adds Peter to Simon's birth name.

John 1:42

And he brought him to Jesus. Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, "You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas" (which is translated, A Stone).

(NKJV)

When this man did not have Christ in his life he was Simon son of Jonah. When he met Christ he became a changed man and a new name was personally given to him by Christ – Cephas or Peter in Greek.

You might say how wonderful it must have been to have a new name given to you by the Son of God himself – and you are right. I would like to say that all true believers will also receive a new name – each and every one of them! Listen to what is written in the book of Revelation concerning the new name that will be given to the children of God.

Revelation 2:17

"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it."

(NKJV)

The first title that Peter calls himself is *'bond-servant'*. This word (DOULOS) means: a slave, in subjection. He could have first called himself an apostle which would bring respect and grandeur but he would rather call himself a servant of the Lord. Paul did the same, calling himself a 'bondservant of Jesus Christ' (Rom. 1:1). James also called himself a bondservant: 'James a bondservant of God' (James 1:1). Jude also opened his epistle with: Jude a 'bondservant of Jesus Christ' (Jude 1). How do you see yourself? Do you place emphasis on being not only a servant of God but also of all your brothers and sisters? Remember what Jesus said:

Mark 10:42-44

(42)But Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them.

(43)"Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant.

(44)"And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all.

(NKJV)

His second title manifests the authority that the Lord God had given him.

(v.1) ... and apostle of Jesus Christ

He wrote to the Christians with authority, for he had been chosen by Christ himself to be a "sent one". Did Peter write these things to set himself apart from other Christians? Was he bragging about whom he had become? The next phrase will give us the answer.

(v.1) ...To those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ:

Not so for Peter, he knew far well who what he had become was given by the grace of God and that made him no better than the other brethren in the faith. This is how Paul described it:

1Cor. 15:10

But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

(NKJV)

Peter writes that the faith of his readers is '*a faith of the same kind as ours*'. There is only one kind of faith, the faith that saves believers from the judgment to come. The substance (not the quantity) of faith is the same whether you are an apostle or a simple believer. So there is no glory to have because one is a bishop, elder, pastor, deacon or anyone in fact. Faith is also described as being given to us '*by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ*'. Our righteousness is never mentioned, as a means of obtaining true faith (in any of the books of the Bible) for it is non-existent before God (Rom. 3:9-20)! Now is Peter actually saying that Jesus is God and Savior? Or is he speaking of God (the Father) and the Savior Jesus Christ (2 different entities)? I would like to note what John MacArthur wrote about the construction of this Greek phrase:

The Greek construction has only one article before this phrase, making the entire phrase refer to the same person. Thus, Peter is identifying Jesus Christ as both Savior and God.

2. Salutations (1:2,3)

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

In verses two and three, Peter will explain the importance of knowledge in the life of the redeemed.

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

Knowledge is like a two-edged sword. On one side it harms us if it is not used well and on the other it protects us. Paul warned the Christians to be careful of knowledge if it is not mastered by love.

1 Corinthians 8:1,2

(1) Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies.

**(2) And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know.
(NKJV)**

Knowledge “puffs” a person up. Knowledge can easily inflate an ego and become destructive. However the pure and well-balanced knowledge of God only brings benefits to the believer and Peter names two of them. The first is grace and the second is peace. The more we know God – the more we will be amazed by the grace that was given unto us: The grace to know him and to belong to him, the grace to have an inheritance waiting for us and a mansion in heaven. Once grace is understood, it brings an overwhelming sense of peace because of the following:

Romans 5:1

**Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,
(NKJV)**

Notice Peter writes that grace and peace *‘be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord’*. Reading the Word, studying the Scriptures, memorizing verses will MULTIPLY grace and peace in our lives. Why? Simply because the more we know about the Eternal God of Israel the more we become grounded in Him and when the tempests of life strike us we remain solidly standing. Remember the story of the two men who built on different foundations and what happened when a storm overtook them?

Luke 6:47-49

(47) "Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like:

(48) "He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock.

(49)"But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great."

(NKJV)

Taking time in the Word has it's great benefits. Let's make certain that we get to know God better because we will be filled with his grace and peace – it's a promise! In verse three Peter continues to proclaim the importance of knowing God. As if it was not enough to have grace and peace MULTIPLIED in our life – he writes:

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.

Here Peter describes two other things that are closely linked with our knowledge of God. He begins with the means through which all this is given unto us.

(v,3) ...His divine power has granted to us

All we receive is through the agent of the divine power of God. In other words God is the origin of all that we possess! Though we may think it is because of our: intellect, capacities, abilities, talents that we are able to acquire possessions, we are fooling ourselves. This is a self-deception! It is through his divine power that God has given us what we possess. Paul reminds the Corinthians that all they are is from God.

1 Cor. 4:7

For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?

(NKJV)

Peter says '*everything*' and not some things. Now what is the '*everything*' that the power of God has given us? First of all:

(v.3) ...everything pertaining to life

There are two aspects of life. The first is our natural life. Peter is speaking of whatever we need for our everyday living, both the fundamental needs of our bodies (food, clothing, housing and so forth) as well as the provision for work. It is the Lord who provides all things that pertain to natural life. The second aspect of his provision is for our spiritual life: *'godliness'* (EUSEBEIA) meaning: piety, godliness or holiness. This is important because we are often taught differently. Peter tells the Christians that ALL that they spiritually need comes from God. Nothing from outside of God can give us any spiritual benefit – nothing! Everything that pertains to your spiritual life flows from the Lord God. Do not be deceived! There is nothing in religion that vitalises your spiritual health. It is only your personal relationship with God that brings spiritual growth, peace, harmony and strength. Remember these words of Paul:

Philippians 3:7-9

(7)But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ.

(8)Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ

(9)and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;

(NKJV)

In other words God gives us what we need for both our natural and spiritual life. May we be forever grateful for the grace that we have received to be so well cared for. Let us also never forget the inheritance that awaits the true believer in heaven. Peter reiterates that this is through knowledge.

(v.3) ...through the true knowledge of Him

So far we have seen the MULTIPLYING benefits of knowing God: grace, peace, things that pertain to life, and things that pertain to godliness. Also notice that Peter speaks of *'true knowledge'*. Is there a *'false knowledge'* of God? Is there someone who deeply desires to twist spiritual truth – absolutely! In Col. 2:22 Paul speaks of *'doctrines of men'*. He also says that we perish by using them! In 1 Tim. 4:1 Paul speaks of the *'doctrines of demons'*. These will deceive even some believers and they will depart from the faith. There is also a very strong warning in another letter from Paul concerning the dangers of different sources of knowledge.

Colossians 2:8

**Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.
(NKJV)**

In verse three Peter also speaks of our “calling”

(v.3) ...who called us by His own glory and excellence.

In every instance in the N-T, where our “calling” is mentioned it is always in relationship with our redemption. This call is based on our repentance towards God and acceptance of Christ as Savior. The calling of God, Peter says, is filled with God’s glory and excellence. How often a Christian can undermine his calling – even forgetting how glorious it is! What is our calling? Peter describes it in his first epistle. We can read this in 1 Peter 2:2-10. The different aspects of our calling are the following:

- Being personally chosen by God
- Becoming living stones
- Forming a spiritual house
- Being a royal priesthood
- Being able to offer up spiritual sacrifices
- Being a chosen generation
- Being a holy nation
- Being a special people who proclaim His praises
- Being called out of darkness into His marvellous light
- Being the people of God
- Having obtained the mercies of God

This is just part of the believer’s calling. Are you thinking of your calling? Does this affect your life? Does it build you up? Have you become a herald of God’s glory and gospel message? If you are born-again, you have received the greatest honor that anyone can receive – being called a child of God (1 John 3:1,2,10; 5:2).

In our final verse, Peter speaks of this calling of ours.

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.

First of all our calling has been ‘*granted to us*’. The word ‘*granted*’ (DOREOMAI) means: to bestow graciously. Once more we must reflect on the grace we have received. Why was it given unto us? What are we doing with this grace in our lives? Let us always glory in what has been given to us. Our calling includes:

(v.4) ...His precious and magnificent promises

What type of promises does the Lord give us? They are described as being ‘*precious*’ (MEGISTOS) meaning: greatest or very great! As we have seen, nothing is greater than being called a child of God! His promises are also ‘*magnificent*’ (TIMIOS) meaning: valuable, costly, honored. They are ‘*magnificent*’ not only because they are holy and pure. But also because they come from our Lord.

One can receive honors from an earthly King or Queen or president from a world power and it will be considered a precious thing to possess. Imagine a direct promise and inheritance from God to you – how precious that is! All these great and precious promises are given for a reason

(v.4) ...so that by them you may become partakers of *the* divine nature

Through the promises of God we become partakers of the divine nature of the Lord. The word ‘*partakers*’ (KOINONOS) means: a sharer, associate, or companion. Since we have become a child of God he shares with us His ‘*divine nature*’. Does this mean that we have become “little gods” or that we have become some sort of divinity? – Absolutely not. Partakers of his divine nature is another way of speaking of being “born again” – born from above and that we now have the living God inhabiting us (John 17:21; 1 Cor. 6:19) We have received God’s favour by his causing us to be born from above.

Peter finally ends by speaking of what this new life gives to the believer.

(v.4) ...having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

We have been enabled to *escape* the corruption of this world. One can see it as an *escape door* in a big building. It is used to free people of the entrapment of a disaster or fire. Our spiritual *escape door* has not only freed us from the world and the coming judgment of this world. It also frees us from the present corruption of the world. Since believers are partakers of the divine nature of God we are able to have victory over the world system. Paul reminds us where the victory comes from:

1Cor. 15:57

**But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.
(NKJV)**

John gives us the means to ‘tap’ into the victory of Jesus – it is through our active faith.

1John 5:4

**For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has
overcome the world--our faith.
(NKJV)**

Let us be grateful to our Lord for coming to us and helping us to ‘*escape*’ the darkness of this world and also the terrible judgment to come.

2nd Peter
02 – Growing in the faith
1:5-11

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. ⁸ For if these *qualities* are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ For he who lacks these *qualities* is blind *or* short-sighted, having forgotten *his* purification from his former sins. ¹⁰ Therefore, 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; ¹¹ for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.
(NASB)

1. How to grow in the faith (1:5-8)

In this section Peter will be speaking about mathematics! I know that it's difficult to believe but it's true. Although I was not that terrible in math back in the day – as a Christian I should be an expert in this spiritual math.

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

The reason that Peter is speaking of in verse five is found in our first section in verse four: '*so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature*'. We have become partakers of the divine nature of God. This happened when we first believed and we were plunged unto the mystical body of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 12:27) becoming "ONE" with him for all times. This miracle also includes the renewing of the mind described in Romans:

Romans 12:1,2

(1)I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

**(2)And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.
(NKJV)**

This is the foundation on which we should act – the grace that God has given us to become his children. Peter teaches us that we should all be *‘applying all diligence’*. The word *‘diligence’* (SPOUDE) means: eagerness, earnestness, or care. In other words we should give a maximum effort to do what he will instruct us to do. We should strive and march forward with all the capacities and spiritual gifts that are given us by the Lord. Remember the parable of the workers in Matthew 25. The first two workers were ‘diligent’ and worked with the capacities they had while the third servant was not ‘diligent’ and did next to nothing. At his return the master was pleased with the first two but with the third servant this is what happened.

Matthew 25:26-28

(26)"But his lord answered and said to him, 'You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed.

(27)'So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest.

**(28)'Therefore take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents.
(NKJV)**

By telling us: *‘applying all diligence’* we should pay attention to what comes next! This is where the spiritual math comes in – and it is all ADDITION.

(v.5)... ‘applying all diligence’

The word *‘applying’* (EPICHOREGEO) means: to furnish, supply, add and contribute. The NASB has chosen the word *‘applying’* but the NKJV, Montgomery’s N-T, WEB, Weymouth’s N-T and ASV use the word ‘add’. I personally prefer the word ‘add’. It’s a picture word that I can grasp right away.

Peter takes for granted that his readers have faith in Jesus Christ for without Christ we are not his (Rom. 8:9)! So what are we to do with our FAITH? It has to go to work, go and ADD something to it and that is *‘moral excellence’*. Did you know that this word is only used three times in the N-T!

Once with Paul in Phil. 4:8 and twice with Peter including 2 P. 1:3 where he speaks of the virtue of God and this present verse! We are expected to live a standard of *'moral excellence'* 'one that is higher than what is found in the world. The words *'moral excellence'* (ARETE) means: valor, excellence, virtue. Some *'moral excellence'* is describes by Paul:

Philippians 4:8

(8) Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy--meditate on these things.

(9) The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.

(NKJV)

Because of our faith, people around us should be able to see in us a life that has human, social, moral, ethical and spiritual standards greater than theirs! So the first thing to add in my spiritual "shopping cart" is a virtuous life.

Then we are called to make another ADDITION to our faith and virtue and that is *'knowledge'*. The word *'knowledge'* (GNOSIS) means: knowledge, science. To help us have *'moral excellence'* we need the knowledge – not any type of knowledge rather the knowledge we receive from God. All other knowledge, for our spiritual life, has no value before the Almighty.

Isaiah 5:13

Therefore my people have gone into captivity, Because they have no knowledge; Their honorable men are famished, And their multitude dried up with thirst.

(NKJV)

Certainly the Jews had knowledge: they could read & write, had erected great buildings, won many battles, had great kings and wise scholars! Yet God said that they "have no knowledge"! They had no knowledge of God, no spiritual insight. Unfortunately they paid a great price for this! Even while in prison and knowing that his death was coming, Paul kept on reading and adding spiritual knowledge to his heart.

2 Timothy 4:13

Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come--and the books, especially the parchments.

(NKJV)

That's why Peter tells Christians to first ADD virtue to their life and then to ADD knowledge to be able to know what virtue is and how to live it! Time and effort should be spent in meditating, reading, studying and praying. This spiritual practice will give you true knowledge – knowledge of the divine.

Then there is another addition:

⁶ and in *your* knowledge, self-control

What is the worth of knowledge if we are not able to control ourselves to apply it? Paul tells us one of the reasons why we should have self-control.

1 Corinthians 7:5

Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

(NKJV)

With the lack of self-control (EGKRATEIA) meaning: continence, temperance, we are an easy prey for the devil! It seems that the more self-control we possess the less temptation we will be attacked with! David lacked '*self-control*' when he asked for a census to be done in Israel (1 Chron. 21) Joab tried to stop David but he would not listen. The outcome was a terrible judgment against him by the Lord God:

1 Chronicles 21:11,12

(11)So Gad came to David and said to him, "Thus says the LORD: 'Choose for yourself,

(12)'either three years of famine, or three months to be defeated by your foes with the sword of your enemies overtaking you, or else for three days the sword of the LORD-the plague in the land, with the angel of the LORD destroying throughout all the territory of Israel.' Now consider what answer I should take back to Him who sent me."

(NKJV)

The effect of his lack of self-control did not only touch David but it touched the entire population of Israel because 70,000 men died from God's judgment! Self-control is needed everywhere even in our sexual life!

1 Corinthians 7:9

but if they cannot exercise self-control, let them marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

(NKJV)

The lack of self-control is never a “plus” in our life. It always gets us into trouble. What Peter is saying is that if we lack self-control we will not be able to apply the spiritual knowledge that we have. So far a believer is called to have faith, then add to it a virtuous life, then add spiritual knowledge, then add self-control. Now is that enough for the child of God to live a good life as a disciple of Christ? Well not exactly – Peter goes on with his additions!

To self-control I am to also add *‘perseverance’*! Actually perseverance is being very patient in life and in circumstances of life! The word *‘perseverance’* (HUPOMONE) means: a hopeful endurance or constancy. Perseverance makes us able to endure situations that otherwise would be intolerable! It gives us the ability to endure in temptation and also to persevere and march forward! Without perseverance I will certainly BEGIN many things but will drop out of all of them. I will fail over and over unless I add perseverance to my spiritual “shopping list”. As Jesus said, there is a great reward in persevering;

Rev. 3:10

"Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.

(NKJV)

Still, Peter is not finished yet with his spiritual math and he adds yet another part to his equation. This time it is *‘godliness’* (v.6)

Godliness is a way of life that is attached to God. The word *‘godliness’* (EUSEBEIA) means: piety, holiness. Jesus speaks of being the salt and light of the world – that’s godliness. Walking in the “narrow path” is godliness. Passing through the “narrow gate” is the way to godliness. In other words godliness is reflecting the character of Jesus in our life – being like he is! Remember what Peter wrote concerning what the Lord God expects of His people.

1 Peter 1:15,16

(15)but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct,

(16)because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy."

(NKJV)

This godliness leads us automatically to our next addition.

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

Now if I think I am a godly person yet “brotherly kindness” is not one of my best characteristics – something is wrong with me! Godliness should always push me to love my brothers and sisters in Christ. ‘*Brotherly kindness*’ (PHILADELPHIA) means: brotherly love or kindness. It means to be on the lookout for them, caring and hoping for the best. It means doing all I can to be of service and bring help when needed. Brotherly kindness is washing the feet of others as Christ did with his disciples.

John 13:12-15

(12) So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you?"

(13) "You call me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am.

(14) "If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.

**(15) "For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.
(NKJV)**

Would I dare say that: faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness are not worth very much if brotherly kindness is not evident in my life!

Peter has just one more addition for us and our spiritual life and that is ‘*love*’ (AGAPE) meaning: love, affection, charity. If the foundation of our Christian life is our FAITH (v.5) the roof that covers everything is LOVE (v.7). It is written that:

Pr. 10:12

Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all sins.

(NKJV)

We also know that: “God is love.” (1 John 4:8b) That is why we should cover everything with love. What does love do? It covers a multitude of sins.

Here is the addition Peter places in front of us: Take faith and add moral excellence plus knowledge plus self-control plus perseverance plus godliness plus brotherly kindness plus love and what do you get? You’ll get a great life:

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

Notice that Peter expects these qualities to be in the believer not as stagnant lakes but rather as a flowing river. He wants these qualities to be *'increasing'* in the Disciple of Christ. Our life will be neither *'useless nor unfruitful'*! We will have a good life, an active life, a pleasant life, a fulfilled life, a great life! That's what these virtues all add up to! Never forget that growing in the faith needs all these ingredients!

2. What happens when you stop growing? (1:9)

Peter warns us of the following:

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

When we DO NOT add these virtues to our life (faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness and love) – we fall flat on our spiritual faces.

First of all we become *'blind'* (TUPHLOS) Meaning: opaque, blind. Darkness once more falls over our spiritual eyes. How terrible it must be to be blind, then be able to see and then to be blind again! Or *'short-sighted'* (MUOPAZO) meaning: to shut the eyes, not able to see far. Our spiritual vision is blurred, we walk with difficulty. The sense of assurance and knowing where we are going has vanished. Either way our life is greatly hindered. Secondly, darkness invades the person and he has *'forgotten his purification from his former sins'*. This is just like Jesus told the church of Laodicea:

Revelation 3:17,18

(17)"Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' -- and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked--

(18)"I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.

(NKJV)

Spiritual slacking will put a stop to our growing in the faith and make us forgetful in relation to our *'former sins'*. The glorious cross of Christ will dim instead of burning in our hearts.

3. Be diligent (1:10,11)

To end this section Peter encourages us with a reminder about the grace that we have received.

¹⁰ Therefore, 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; ¹¹ for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

God has called us to be his own, he has determined to bring a new birth unto our lost soul!

1 Corinthians 1:26-29

(26) For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.

(27) But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty;

(28) and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are,

(29) that no flesh should glory in His presence.

(NKJV)

We have to be *'diligent'* (SPOUDAZO) meaning: to use speed, to make an effort, about our calling and election. We need to keep in our hearts the wonder of God's grace! Remember who you have become – a child of God!

Peter says that when you do keep your "calling and election" in mind – *'you will never stumble'*. The word *'stumble'* means: to err, to sin or to fall. Peter tells the believers to 'keep focused on the Lord'. Like sheep who follow their shepherd never err and go astray so will the believer who willingly focuses on the Lord. Peter is absolutely right – I do stumble when I forget or set aside who I have become in Christ Jesus!

¹¹ for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

When time comes, if we have these spiritual qualities alive in us and they have given fruit for the glory of God, our entrance into his kingdom will be without any shame. Remember what Christ said to the faithful worker:

Matthew 25:21

**"His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'
(NKJV)**

Let's keep growing in the faith by applying what we have learned today!

2nd Peter
03 - Peter's approaching death
1:12-15

**¹² Therefore, 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. ¹³ I 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.
(NASV)**

A well-known poem found in the Bible is certainly that which Ecclesiastes wrote in his third chapter. It is the beginning of this poem that is the part we are interested in relation with our text of today.

Ecclesiastes 3:

**1 To everything there is a season, A time for every purpose under heaven:
2 A time to be born, And a time to die; A time to plant, And a time to pluck what is planted;
(NKJV)**

There is a season for everything even a time to be born and also a time to die. It is with the assurance of his approaching death that Peter speaks in our text.

1. Remember (1:12-15)

¹² Therefore, 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. ¹³ I 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.

Peter seemed to have one thing on his mind that had a far greater worth than any other thing. He '*will always be ready*' (as he wrote in v.12) as should we all. As an apostle he was on a mission. This phrase in English comes from the Greek word (AMELEO) meaning, in a negative form: not to be careless of. We all are more or less careless about certain things. Sometimes it doesn't really matter, but other times there are great consequences to our carelessness. At this stage in his life, Peter does not want to be careless and intends to be careful.

¹² Therefore, I will always be ready to remind you of these things

Peter desires '*to remind*' (HUPOMIMNESKO) meaning: suggest to the mind, put in mind. There are things that he realizes are so important, for all true believers to understand that he perseveres in his teaching ministry. Should we not all persevere in our faith and in our passing the faith to the next generation! Now '*these things*' may speak of what he has just taught in verses five to eleven concerning growing in the faith or it could be about what he is going to write. In both cases the aim of this entire epistle is to remind Christians about things concerning their walk with God. Intention comes before action – that's how it works. We never do anything before we intend to do it! That is why Peter has been intending and why he is writing this letter. May I ask what your intentions are for the Lord?

- to walk as a child of light
- to live a life of salt
- to be patient with your brethren
- to read your Bible systematically
- to be at the service of the Lord
- to end that special sin in your life

Peter's intent was to '*remind you of these things*'(v.12). Usually when we remind people it is because we fear that they have forgotten but this was not the case with his readers!

(v.12) ... even though you *already* know *them*,

The idea behind '*already know*' is (EIDO), to know, to be aware, or understand. These Christians already knew the truth but Peter wanted to remind them. It's a good thing to be reminded of the Lord's intent for us. Peter is not the only writer who '*reminds*' his readers. Paul does the same (1 Cor. 4:17; 2 Tim. 1:6; 2:14; Titus 3:1). So does Jude (Jude 1:5). Since the Christians knew what to do why then remind them of things that they already know? Was it not a waste of time? Actually Peter reminded the brethren because:

(v.12) ...and have been established in the truth which is present with you.

It was because they were '*established*' (STERIZO) meaning: steadfast, to turn resolutely, that Peter brings back to mind the will of God. It was an encouragement that he was giving them. We all need to be encouraged in the things that we know – don't we? Isn't it what we are doing right now? I am encouraging you – who already have been established in the faith. Do we not feel better, built-up and stronger after a Bible study?

So Peter, while knowing that his death was at hand – kept on encouraging others. Is he not a wonderful model for all of us? Do you have any battles regarding exhorting or encouraging others? Do you sometimes put it off or simply keep silent even though you know that God desires you to speak? We can be a bit like Timothy who seemed to have a timid character.

2 Timothy 1

6 Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.

7 For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

8 Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God, (NKJV)

Paul does exactly what Peter is doing – REMINDING PEOPLE! In this case it was Timothy. Timothy needed to be reminded to:

- inflame the gift of God
- not have a spirit of fear
- own a spirit of power, love and sound mind
- not be ashamed of Jesus nor of Paul
- be ready to suffer for the gospel

This truth '*is present with you*'. The word '*present*' (PAREIMI) means: to be near, time being. Not only did they know these things but they were near to them. In other words the things that they knew they kept near them – in their hearts. Remember what the Lord told his people:

Deut. 30

14" But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it. (NKJV)

Peter '*considered it right*' to do so and so should we. It is right for us to encourage others, to exhort them, and bring them back in the right path. The word '*consider*' (HEGEOMAI) means: to lead, command, to deem.

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

Peter saw this as '*right*' (DIKAIOS) meaning: equitable, just, right. He perfectly understood that it was a just thing to do. Encouraging others in the ways of the Lord is never wrong – never! Although he knows of his coming death Peter doesn't seem to be looking forward to his retirement! – Not at all, he actually does not want to step down from his spiritual calling. Until when, is Peter going to REMIND people about their new life in Christ?

(v.13) ...as long as I am in this *earthly* dwelling

In marriage we say, 'until death do us part' – in spiritual activity we say, "*as long as I am in this earthly dwelling.*" The word '*dwelling*' (SKENOMA) means: an encampment or the body. Peter is saying: 'As long as I have breath in me I will continue in my walk and my ministries.' He truly is a model for all of us to follow. The aim of reminding the believers was the following:

(v.13) ...to stir you up by way of reminder,

Peter's desire was not to keep the believers resting in their salvation and letting life pass by. He did not want them to hibernate through life only to wake up when the Lord would arrive. He wanted '*to stir you up*' (DIEGEIRO) meaning: to wake fully, arouse. Far from putting them to sleep, Peter wanted to wake them up. How many believers are barely awake spiritually? How many sleep through their lives while hiding their true identity? As a result they become useless for the Lord. Remember what Paul wrote!

Romans 6

13 And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

(NKJV)

In the next verse Peter gives us a hint about his coming death.

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

I don't believe that we really know how Peter knew of *the "laying aside of my earthly dwelling"* – but he did. The words '*laying aside*' (APOTHEOSIS) means: putting away, laying aside. It's a beautiful picture of what happens when we cross from this side to the other. It is as though we shed this earthly body to embrace a new body – a celestial body. Paul writes concerning this.

1 Corinthians 15

38 But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body.

39 All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of animals, another of fish, and another of birds.

40 There are also celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.

41 There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory.

42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption.

43 It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power.

44 It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

(NKJV)

How did Peter know? I can only guess that the Lord had spoken to him about it. In the past Jesus had already told him that it was going to be an unpleasant death and that it would be when he would be old.

John 21

18 "Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish."

19 This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, "Follow Me."

(NKJV)

I want you to notice in verse 19 that Jesus says that by his death *'he would glorify God!'*

Not only is our life meant to glorify the Lord but our death is also! Paul also wanted his coming death to honor the Lord and he wrote the following to Timothy.

2 Timothy 4

6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand.

7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

(NKJV)

Each of us will one day face death and as we grow older we know that the day is getting nearer. Like Peter and Paul, our desire should be to honor God until that very day comes along.

Peter ends by saying:

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

This is the second time that Peter says that he will be *'diligent'* (SPOUDAZO) meaning: to make effort, to use speed. He does exactly the same as he teaches others to do (v.5,10). When one senses that death is coming they often prepare for it.

- write a will and testament
- get their finances in order
- prepare their funeral
- and so forth

Peter did the same thing but on the spiritual aspect. He knew that his *'departure'* (EXODOS) meaning: Fig. death, decease, departure was at hand and he made certain that once he would leave this world he would leave a legacy. This legacy is having taught the word of God and encouraged people in the Lord until the very end – why did he do this?

(v.15) ...you will be able to call these things to mind.

He wanted the word of God to be deeply rooted in the hearts of his readers. He wanted them to be able to '*call these things to mind*' (MNEME) meaning: memory, remembrance. He wanted to leave the Word of God printed in their minds for that was the important thing in life – having the Word of God in their hearts. The Word of God is the only thing that will last forever.

Matthew 24

**35 "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.
(NKJV)**

May we all be good stewards not only in our life but also in our death.

2nd Peter
04 - The prophetic Word
1:16-21

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.

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. 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.

(NASB)

1. What the prophetic is not (1:16a)

In this section Peter will continue to speak about the legacy that he wants to leave behind. He will be speaking about one of the greatest mysteries found in the Bible – How the word of God came to man! In verse sixteen Peter writes about “How the prophetic Word DID NOT COME ABOUT.”

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.

Two things are mentioned about “How the prophetic Word DID NOT COME ABOUT.” First of all these words were not ‘*cleverly devised*’. The word ‘cleverly’ gives the idea of a: skillful deceit or an artifice in Greek. So these prophetic words did not come about from a master plan to deceive people into believing. Remember the story found in 1 Kings 22 when the king of Israel gathered many of his prophets to verify if he should go to war – this was their response:

1 kings 22

6 Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men, and said to them, "Shall I go against Ramoth Gilead to fight, or shall I refrain?" So they said, "Go up, for the Lord will deliver it into the hand of the king." (NKJV)

They all spoke in a way that would please the king. They wanted to flatter him and spoke words (prophesized) they said came from the Lord but did not. So King Jehoshaphat asked the King of Israel if there were any other prophets. He answered 'yes' but he didn't like him for the following:

1 kings 22

8 So the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "There is still one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may inquire of the LORD; but I hate him, because he does not prophesy good concerning me, but evil." And Jehoshaphat said, "Let not the king say such things!"

(NKJV)

The King of Israel did not like Micaiah because *'he does not prophecy good concerning me, but evil'*. A great many people do not like to listen to the prophetic word of God because they do not like the way that it often condemns them. In general people do not like being told that they are sinners, that their lives need to change and that they need to repent unto God and humble themselves by asking Christ to save them from the coming judgment.

Secondly they were not *'devised fables'* meaning that they were not stories made up for this purpose also. Since people generally do not want to hear the word of God they listen to false prophets who utter *'devised fables'*. The apostle Paul speaks of this tendency.

2 Timothy 4

3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers;

4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.

(NKJV)

Still today great is the number of people who love to listen to those who call themselves men and women of God. Unfortunately many messages are not from the Lord. These teachers are very popular and well accepted but they lead people astray teaching doctrines of demons (1 Tim. 4:1). What Peter is saying is that the prophetic word did not come out of manor from a clever plan to deceive people. What were true prophetic words born of?

2. What the prophetic word is (1:16b-21)

(v.16) ..., but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty.

Notice that Peter says 'we'. It was not a question that only one person was illuminated – many were. All these men were 'eyewitnesses' (EPOPTES) meaning: a looker on. What they brought to others they had not heard from other people but from His majesty (MEGALEIOTES) meaning: superb, magnificence, and mighty power. It was God Himself who uttered what they brought forth. What was written (or said) on the subject of the:

(v.16) ...coming of our Lord Jesus Christ

This was based on the eyewitness of Peter. Peter witnessed to what he personally saw and what he had personally lived with Jesus during his ministry here on earth. This was the basis of his teachings. There was no master plan to deceive and no made up fables. In those days, it would have been relatively easy to find out if something was true simply because most of the other witnesses were still alive.

Peter, in verse seventeen, gives an account of one of the things that he had witnessed concerning the Lord Jesus Christ.

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.

This speaks about when Peter, John and James were on the mountain alone with Christ.

Matthew 17

1 Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves;

2 and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light.

3 And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him.

4 Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

5 While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!"

6 And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid.

7 But Jesus came and touched them and said, "Arise, and do not be afraid."

8 When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.

(NKJV)

Peter says: “we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.” The prophetic Word says that the Father gave Christ two things at his transfiguration.

The first was HONOR and the second was GLORY (v.17)! The word ‘*honor*’ (TIME) means: a value, esteem or dignity. The name of Jesus was to become the name above all names.

Ephesians 1

20 which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,

21 far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.

(NKJV)

He was also given ‘*glory*’ by the Father. The book of Revelations teaches us that in heaven the Lord Jesus is worshipped and glorified.

Revelation 5

12 saying with a loud voice: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain To receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!"

(NKJV)

In other words the Father placed his approbation (or approval) on the Son. The Father actually openly *testified* in favor of his Son.

(v.17) ...“This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased”

The words ‘*well-pleased*’ (EUDOKEO) means: approved, to think well of. In the eyes of the Father, the Son was a perfect son. He was all that the Father wanted him to be. One might wonder what Jesus did to receive such a high honor from God – the Father. The answer comes from his own lips:

John 4

34 Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.

(NKJV)

May I suggest that the Father will be well-pleased with you when you are also preoccupied with His work and when the Father's will actually become a burning desire as when we search for food.

In verse eighteen, Peter gives proof that he was there at Christ's transfiguration.

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

He did not make up a cunning fable or a story for little children, he was actually there '*we heard this utterance*'. The word '*utterance*' (PHONE) means: disclosure, a tone, an address or a language. He actually hears the voice of God! Do you remember when the Israelites were at the foot of Mount Sinai and the presence of God was seen on the mountain top and how the people were so afraid (Ex. 20:18,19)? They were so terrified that they did not want to hear God speak and asked Moses to be the one that speaks to them for God. We know that Peter, John and James, who were on the mountain top with Jesus, were also afraid and fell to their faces when God spoke. Still they were willing to hear and they remembered what the Father had said concerning the Son. As adopted children of God may we desire to hear our Father's voice and not tremble like the Israelites did.

Peter also reveals the source of the prophetic word – '*made from heaven*'! So once again Peter testifies of the prophetic Word. It is not from men but from God in heaven! This was not an 'audible' hallucination for all three men (Peter, John and James) had heard the same thing! So what are we to do with the prophetic Word of God?

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.

Peter says that now we know the source of these prophecies – God himself!

We are to '*do well to pay attention*'. There is great wisdom in paying attention to what the Lord says. Many tragedies are found in the Scriptures testify to this fact.

- Adam and Eve in the garden
- Cain killing Abel
- The tower of Babel with the confusing of the languages
- The flood and people refusing to believe the message of Noah

All of these and so many more witness to the foolishness of not heeding the word of God. Did you know that the trip from Egypt to the Promised Land should have taken about 10-

14 days yet it took 40 years for the people to enter it? The reason for this was that they did not believe that the land was 'good' like God had told them. If you are 'going nowhere' in your life it may just be because you refuse or neglect the spoken words of God. I should consider the Word of God...

(v.19) ...as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts.

The dark place is this world and the light is God's Word that shines.

Psalms 119

105 Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.

(NKJV)

We desperately need the Word of God to enlighten our lives, to shine upon our steps, and to repel the darkness. Peter also speaks of the length of time that we need these prophetic words:

(v.19) ...until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts.

We need to heed the Words of God until the appearance of Jesus Christ, until his return! Every day we need to read the Scriptures because every day we need light to shine on our path! Notice that the light should remain in our hearts because the heart is the seat of our whole being – including our emotions.

As if Peter desperately deems important where the prophetic does not come from, he repeats it in verse twenty and twenty one.

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.

Not only does the prophetic Word not come from man (v.16) but the INTERPRETATION of the prophetic Word should also not come from man! There is NO place for private interpretation when we read the Holy Scriptures.

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

There is no place for what I think or believe – the interpretation should come from the Scriptures themselves! We should allow the Bible to speak and testify of itself. With our limited comprehension no man or woman will ever be able to understand ALL the prophetic word of God perfectly. Paul speaks of it this way.

1 Cor. 2

**11 For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.
(NKJV)**

Even though man cannot fully understand the mind of God, God made the way to salvation quite simple, simple enough for a child to understand.

John 14

**6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.
(NKJV)**

In our final verse, Peter teaches us who does the revealing. It is the Holy Spirit who takes from God and brings to man!

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

Do you remember one of the promises of Christ concerning the Holy Spirit? It was given by the Lord Jesus, in the upper room, the night he was arrested.

John 16

**13 "However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.
(NKJV)**

This promise is for our own guidance for everyday life and there is a special guidance for those who were going to write the sacred scriptures! Certain people were moved, guided and inspired by the Holy Spirit to write so that we can benefit from God's Word. Therefore the Bible is the prophetic Word of God – given to certain people to write down so that we can be edified in our life. Let us take advantage of what we have received from God and also read and heed His word every day.

2nd Peter
05 - False doctrines
2:1-3

But 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.² Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned;³ and in *their* greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.
(NASB)

1. False prophets and teachers (2:1)

In our present text we will be introduced to enemies of our soul and I am not speaking of demonic beings – but people who have twisted the word of God. If you have studied the Scriptures in both the Old and New Testament you surely have noticed that false prophets and teachers are spiritual rodents! They eat away at the truth and infect all who come in contact with them. Just as the rodents (mostly rats) brought millions to their death with the black plague so do false teachers bring spiritual death by the venom of their false teachings! The black plague hit Eurasia from 1347 to 1351 and it is believed that about 20,000,000 people died! It is also believed that it was called the ‘Black Plague’ because people who were infected by it had black boils on their skin. The rats that carried the fleas that were infested with the disease were black rats. This may be another reason why it was called the ‘Black Plague’.

In our last section Peter finished by saying that it was the Holy Spirit who inspired men to speak for God (1:21). In this section he will speak about another type of preacher – preachers of deception and cleverly invented stories. Peter describes a gruesome picture of these heretics.

But 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.

What we first notice is that these false prophets and teachers '*arose among the people*'. Believers are not automatically secure simply because they are part of a group where everybody is a true follower of Jesus. Remember Judas who was part of the twelve apostles AND still betrayed Jesus. There are people who mingle with true believers but are not born-again. These false prophets are not satisfied with trying from the *outside* to get to you, they are so determined that they *infiltrate* the assemblies of the Brethren. Jesus warned us about them:

Matthew 7

15 "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.

16 "You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thistles?

17 "Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.

18 "A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit.

(NKJV)

There are three main traits of character that we should be on the lookout for. Jesus teaches us these things so that we will be able to recognize them, warn others of them and stay away from them. The first warning is the following: They profess to be what they are not. They come dressed as sheep (disciples are called sheep Mat. 10:6,16; 25:32). They desire to be accepted as true believers. They will outwardly look like any Disciple of Christ but inside they are quite the opposite! The second warning is that they are '*ravenous wolves*'. This speaks of their true character. The English word '*ravenous*' gives the idea of being voracious, predatory or insatiable. They never seem to get enough, they always persevere in their demise. They are not satisfied with a few victims, they desire the entire flock of sheep. The third warning speaks about the fruits they bear. Here we are warned about the fruits of both their actions and the fruits of their lips. These false teachers will bring false teachings concerning the Lord. They often mix truth with a pinch here and there of human philosophy or human traditions. It will SOUND good, but like poison hidden in honey once it is taken in it will destroy your faith. We are to watch out and recognize them. Still today there are modern day false prophets and teachers everywhere. Jesus tells us their goal:

Matthew 24

11 "Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.

(NKJV)

Their aim is to deceive people – blind them into accepting their warped thinking. They will mislead you and turn you away from the teachings of the Scriptures. Jesus also tells us of their unbelievable capacities.

Matthew 24

24 "For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.

(NKJV)

The power of some of these false prophets is so enormous that they will be capable of doing '*great signs and wonders*'. Still today people want to see 'miracles' and will not believe if they are not manifested. Remember that the dragon in the Book of Revelation actually does great signs even to make fire fall from the heavens (13:13). He will do signs to deceive all those who dwell on earth (13:14). Spirits of demons will do great signs to gather people to fight against God Almighty (16:14). The beast and the false prophet will do signs to deceive people into getting the mark of the beast (19:20) but they will be cast into the lake of fire. The recurring theme of the false prophets and teachers is the same as that of the anti-christ, beast and false prophet – to deceive people. Never be caught by signs and wonders rather listen to what they say and make certain that it concurs with the word of God. We all need to be mindful just like the believers of Berea were:

Acts 17

11 These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.

(NKJV)

These false teachers and prophets who will be among the believers have one goal in mind:
(v.1) ...who will secretly introduce destructive heresies

The word '*secretly*' (PAREISAGO) means: to lead in aside, to introduce surreptitiously. They will quietly bring in – they won't yell, have parades, make a big show of what they want to teach. But '*secretly*', softly, slowly, gently they will bring in their false teachings. They will be so '*secretly*' that many will not even notice and won't see the difference! What they will bring in will be '*destructive heresies*'. They will bring in '*heresies*' (HAIREISIS) meaning: a choice, dis-union, heresy. They will go further than what is taught and bring in a different gospel. These false prophets and teachers were also working in the churches in Galatia and Paul writes the following:

Galatians 1

6 I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel,

7 which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.

8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.

9 As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.

(NKJV)

Whoever does these things:

- brings a different gospel
- perverts the gospel
- preaches another gospel

Using very strong language, Paul comes to this conclusion: '*let him be accursed*'! Peter also teaches that these false teachers deny the sovereignty of God.

(v.1) ...even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.

The word *'denying'* (AREUEOMAI) means: to contradict, disavow or reject. In other words they will go directly against the person and the teachings of the Lord God. As we have seen with Paul they will introduce a 'new gospel' that will capture the minds of the followers of Christ. Still today we see this all the time. People come up with a newly discovered secret or say they have received a new revelation from God. Here they deny *'the master who bought them'*. They either are true Christians who were led astray by other false preachers or they believed that they were true Christians but were not really born-again. An example of this is found in the book of Acts concerning a man called Simon who had previously practiced sorcery. It is written that he believed the message of Philip and was even baptized, but something was wrong – his heart!

Acts 8

17 Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

18 And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money,

19 saying, "Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit."

20 But Peter said to him, "Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money!"

21 "You have neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God.

22 "Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you.

23 "For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity."

(NKJV)

There are false teachers and prophets who take advantage of people and know it. There are also people who believe that they are of the faith but are not and carry with them another gospel! Whatever the case, their reward will be – *swift destruction upon themselves*. The word *'destruction'* (APOLEIA) means: ruin, loss or waste. A great loss will come upon them either at the judgment seat of Christ (for believers) or the last judgment (for unbelievers).

2. Their followers (2:2)

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

In verse two, Peter speaks of those who will accept these false teachers. Notice that Peter writes '*many*'. A great deal of people will turn away from the truth that the Messiah brought. How awful to realize the power of seduction that these false teachers and prophets have. How important it is for believers to be anchored on the solid rock and not be carried away by the winds of human philosophy or demonic doctrines. These people will use '*their sensuality*', giving the idea of lascivious doings. We have the same idea in the book of Jude:

Jude 1

4 For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

(NKJV)

The ways of the false teachers do not lead to Christ, or spiritual truth – quite the contrary! The '*many*' will follow the doings of their false shepherds. The '*them*' are those who follow the false prophets. As I said they will emulate their new leaders and the outcome of this will be that:

(v.2) ...the way of the truth will be maligned;

As a result the testimony of these '*many*' who abandon the faith and follow false teachers the gospel will be '*maligned*' (BLASPHEMEO) meaning: rail, revile or to speak evil of. The gospel will be mocked! People will laugh at the teachings of Christ because of the testimony of these false Christians. As you can see there does not exist one single reason why we should listen to these false teachers! Today, many of them can be found on television, on the internet, in certain churches, the radio and the printed page. All of them have one thing in common – they spread a false gospel. Can you tell what comes out of their teachings? In Greek it is (BLASOHEMO) where we get our English word 'blasphemes'. They are blasphemers and you know what happens to blasphemers, don't you!

Revelation 22

14 Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.

15 But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie. (my emphasis)

(NKJV)

They will forever be *outside* and never enter the Holy City!

3. Their outcome (2:3)

In verse three, Peter speaks of the desire and final outcome of these false teachers.

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

Once again we see the desire of their hearts. Please notice that they are filled with '*greed*' (PLEONEXIA) meaning: avarice, fraudulency, extortion, covetous. Their hearts are not pure at all. They are not honest towards you, they are ravenous wolves who seek to devour you. They are like their master – the devil.

³ and in *their* greed they will exploit you with false words

They '*will exploit you*' (EMPOREUONOMAI) meaning: a peddler, to trade, buy or sell. In other words they take advantage of you – rob you – take from you. That's what their desire is towards you. They will use '*false words*', falsehood, lies, and fairy tales against you – trying to attract you to them and as far away from God's truth as they can! Still today, believers need to be diligent like Peter said earlier in chapter one (1:10). Do not worry – God is in control and their judgment has already been pronounced.

(v.3) ...their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.

One day, when time has come, all of these men and women who have twisted the Holy Scriptures to their benefit, will come to judgment. Their sentence has already been pronounced. God has not forgotten them.

2nd Peter
06 - False teachers *1
2:4-11

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), ⁹*then* the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment, 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,¹¹ whereas angels who are greater in might and power do not bring a reviling judgment against them before the Lord.

(NASB)

In this section of his letter, Peter will give examples of those who twisted the teachings and morality of God and how he dealt with them. He will also manifest the grace that the Lord had upon those who did not follow the way that lead to abandoning the Lord. This section is a direct continuation of what we have studied in our last section. We had spoken about false doctrines. As you know, these false doctrines are brought about through people that the Bible calls either false prophets or false teachers. Peter will remind God's people how the Lord deals with these people – the ones that twist his words for their benefit. It also is a stern warning to his audience not to be tempted to modify what God has said, as we are reminded by the prophet Isaiah!

Isaiah 5

20 Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

21 Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, And prudent in their own sight!

(NKJV)

1. The example of fallen angels (2:4)

Peter will give three examples of how God dealt with such cases. He begins by giving the example of the angelic world. As we all know, at one point, some of the angels rebelled against God and his authority. Peter explains it this way:

(4) For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment;

Not all angels sinned, some remained faithful to the Lord and they remained in God's glory and received God's approval. But for those who did not keep his word:

1. God did not spare the angels who sinned (v.4)

This means that God did not withhold the consequences of their actions. He didn't brush it off or keep silent. God had spoken and the angels knew what to expect and he did exactly what his holiness dictated. God did this only when they '*sinned*'. God was good to them and treated them with all fairness, but he could not accept their sinfulness against Him. There was a rebellion, having Lucifer at its head. He wanted not only to be as God is, but to dethrone Him!

Isaiah 14

12 "How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations!

13 For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north;

14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.'

15 Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, To the lowest depths of the Pit.

16 "Those who see you will gaze at you, And consider you, saying: 'Is this the man who made the earth tremble, Who shook kingdoms,

(NKJV)

2. God cast them down to hell (v.4)

As we know, hell is a place reserved for those who refuse God's authority. This is what the American Tract Society Dictionary says about hell:

The term hell is most commonly applied to the place of punishment in the unseen world, and is usually represented in the Greek New Testament by the word Gehenna, 'valley of Hinnom'. See HINNOM. In 2Pe 2:4, the rebellious angels are said, in the original Greek, to have been cast down into "Tartarus," this being the Grecian name of the lowest abyss of Hades. Other expressions are also used, indicating the dreadfulness of the anguish there to be endured. It is called "outer darkness," "flame," "furnace of fire," "unquenchable fire," "fire and brimstone," etc., Mt 8:12; 13:42; 22:13; 25:20,41; Mr 9:43-48; Jg 1:13; Re 20:14. The misery of hell will consist in the privation of the vision and love of God, exclusion from every source of happiness, perpetual sin, remorse of conscience in view of the past, malevolent passions, the sense of the just anger of God, and all other sufferings of body and soul which in the nature of things are the natural results of sin, or which the law of God requires as penal inflections. The degrees of anguish will be proportioned to the degrees of guilt, Mt 10:15; 23:14; Lu 12:47,48. And these punishments will be eternal, like the happiness of heaven. The wrath of God will never cease to abide upon the lost soul, and it will always be "the wrath to come."

This is where SOME of the fallen angels are, for we know that the N-T teaches us that there are still fallen angels presently in this world (Mat. 9:33; 17:18; Mark 7:26; Luke 4:33; Acts 19:15,16).

3. God has delivered them into chains of darkness (v.4)

This teaches us that some are presently chained. They seem to be so evil that God will not allow them to roam. It is no wonder that the Lord commands to have absolute no dealings with these defiled spirits who often portray themselves as divinities and idols (Lev. 19:4; 26:1; 26:30). Some evil spirits are so powerful that in the end-times it will take only three of them to deceive the world into fighting God at Armageddon (Rev. 16:13-16). Imagine how evil, wicked and malicious those that are presently chained must be! In his epistle Jude expresses the same thing:

Jude 1

6 And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day;

(NKJV)

Until the great judgment day – some fallen angels are kept in chains in pure darkness! They will then be thrown into the lake of fire (Rev. 19:20; 20:10).

4. To be reserved for judgment (v.4)

There is no redemption for the fallen angels. Christ did not die for them. There is no hope for the fallen spirits, just an eternity of judgment to come with absolutely no second chance! It seems that when some of the angels rebelled against God, the outcome of their revolt was a swift judgment. There is no court of appeal, for the Lord God is the supreme judge. This may be a factor in understanding why these evil spirits hate the redeemed so much. The redeemed have received the grace of having a full pardon given to them. More than that, they have become adopted children of God (Gal. 4:5; Eph. 1:5). The fallen angels rage against them because of the forgiveness they have received in Christ Jesus. If today you are a child of God – be eternally grateful for the grace you have received and walk in the light to honor your heavenly Father. After speaking of what happened to the angels who rebelled against the Lord, Peter now speaks of another group who did injustice.

2. The example of the ancient world (2:5)

⁵ and 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;

Peter speaks of the ancient world – the world before the flood. It only took ten generations (Gen. 5), before the world became totally corrupt (sinful) and the Lord decided to put an end to these evil people:

Genesis 6

5 Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

6 And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.

7 So the LORD said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them."

(NKJV)

They too perished, along with everything that had breath EXCEPT for those living in the ark! God did not withhold his judgment. In his patience he waited ten generations but justice had to be revealed and a severe judgment came pouring down upon mankind – the Great Flood. All died, except those who were in the ark that Noah had built. Jesus speaks of ‘the days of Noah’ comparing them to the coming of the Son of Man (Luke 17:22,26,27). He will come suddenly, just like the judgment did in the time of Noah. Are you prepared for that day? Will you be taken by surprise? Have you handed your life over to Christ and repented of your sinful ways?

Notice that Peter calls Noah ‘*a preacher of righteousness*’. The people of his day had been warned of the coming judgment. It took Noah 120 years to build the ark and during all that time, people had the opportunity not only to hear him speak of God and the need of changing their lives, but also to see, step by step, the erecting of the ark. It was there for all to see, an immense boat built on dry land! This was the way out, to accept God’s refuge from the verdict of destruction of life. Today God has given us another proof of the impending judgment – the death and resurrection of Christ. This is the living proof that God gave mankind so, that they may believe and repent of their evil ways.

Acts 17

30 "Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent,

31 "because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead."

(NKJV)

3. The example of Sodom and Gomorrah. (2:6)

⁶ and 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;

The final example of judgment, over those who preach or teach against the will of God, is Sodom and Gomorrah. These towns were filled with people who loved to live a perverted sexual life. They openly rejected the ways of the Lord and taught the younger generation to do the same.

Genesis 19

4 Now before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both old and young, all the people from every quarter, surrounded the house.

5 And they called to Lot and said to him, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may know them carnally."

(NKJV)

God destroyed both cities and all its inhabitants. God will not be mocked – all those who change his Word will be condemned (Gal. 6:7)! The Book of Revelation gives a very strong warning to all who would desire to change the ways and words of the Lord God.

Revelation 22

18 For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book;

19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

(NKJV)

Notice that Peter writes the following concerning Sodom and Gomorrah *'having made them an example to those who would live ungodly lives thereafter'*. This was an example for all to understand. So were the fallen angels kept in chains. So were the people who died in the flood. God has left these and many more examples of his hatred against sin. This is a warning, for those who think they can delight in sinning and get away with it.

4. The example of Lot (2:7,8)

On the other hand, for those who keep his words and bring no change to them there is a great blessing. Peter refers back to Noah and the seven others who were cared for by the Lord in this flood.

Noah stood as a “preacher of righteousness” (v.5) and he was saved, along with his family. Then Peter speaks of Lot and how the Lord took care of him and his family.

⁷ and 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),

It is written that Lot was a *righteous man* and he was constantly tormented by the lawlessness of the people. Before destroying Sodom and Gomorrah, God made certain that Lot and his family were able to get out and be saved from the destruction to come. The only reason that Lot's wife died, is because she disobeyed the Lord (as he was saving her) by looking back at these towns instead of always looking forward!

5 A final encouragement (2:9,10)

Being for or against the Lord - keeping his word or not – that makes all the difference!

9) then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment,

(10) and especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority. They are presumptuous, self-willed. They are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries,

The Lord knows: *'how to deliver the godly'*. God has delivered the godly from the judgment to come. Christ has died in their stead. He has paid the full penalty for their sins. He was the propitiation for our sins (1 John 2:2)

God also knows how to: *'reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment'*. Why should the Lord bring this punishment? It is because of their sinful lives and their hardened hearts that did not want to repent. They..

- walked according to the flesh (v.10)
- lusted for uncleanness (v.10)
- despised authority (v.10)
- were all presumptuous (v.10)
- were self-willed (v.10)
- were not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries (v.10)

False teachers, whoever they are:

- the angels before their fall
- people before the flood
- people living in Sodom and Gomorrah
- people within the churches

Will all be judged severely. They will be tormented in hell without any opportunity to get out. So let us be careful not to teach falsehood about God for he will not accept this even of his children! We will also be chastised for our own benefit (1 Peter 4:17)!

2nd Peter
07 – False teachers *2
2:12-17

¹² But 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, ¹³ suffering wrong as the wages of doing wrong. They count it a pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are stains and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, as they carouse with you, ¹⁴ having eyes full of adultery that never cease from sin, enticing unstable souls, having a heart trained in greed, accursed children; ¹⁵ forsaking the right way, they have gone astray, having followed the way of Balaam, the *son* of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; ¹⁶ but 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.

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

(NASB)

In this section of his letter, Peter continues to teach about the false teachers who can spread in the Body of Christ – like cancer spreads in a human body! Peter will give an in-depth description of them and their character. We will look at these verses as being one section. Peter begins by identifying who he will be speaking about, '*But these*', refers to the ones he was speaking just before hand – the ones we studied in our last section.

1. Peter's description of false teachers and prophets (2:12-17)

¹² But 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,

In verse twelve, Peter gives us three facts about these false teachers. He first speaks of their sinful nature:

¹² But these, like unreasoning animals, born as creatures of instinct to be captured and killed

Their nature is exposed – they are *‘unreasoning animals’* – very strong words. The word *‘unreasonable’* (ALOGOS) means: irrational, unreasonable. Just as animals are irrational in their ways so are these false teachers and prophets. He sees them as brutal (because of the impact of their false teachings) and as beasts, as though they have been deprived of any resemblance to God. They are pictured as *‘unreasonable animals’* not as men – because that’s what they are in his mind. They lack in every sense “the image of God”! It seems that sin has totally deprived them of anything that God intended them to be. Notice that Peter describes them to be AS beasts – for they are NOT beasts. He is not saying that they are animals but rather that they think and act as animals who do not have this God-given capacity! Peter also speaks of what should be done with these *‘unreasoning animals’*:

(v.12) ...captured and killed

Peter is not telling the Disciples of Christ to go out “hunting” for these false teachers – to catch them, and to destroy them. However, the imagery he gives or the comparison manifests that they (like natural animals) have a bleak future. Animals are captured and killed for their meat and these false prophets and teachers one day will also be captured (at the last judgment) and will have a dreadful end (eternity in hell).

Next, Peter speaks of what the false teachers do!

(v.12) ...reviling where they have no knowledge

They are false teachers so they – SPEAK, they TEACH but they do not understand what they are speaking about. The words *‘no knowledge’* (AGNOEO) means: not to know, to ignore. In French there is a saying that describes people who don’t know what they are speaking about–‘Ils parlent à travers leur chapeau’ meaning ‘they speak through their hats’. This is what the false teachers were doing. They were *‘reviling’* (BLASPHEMO) meaning: to vilify, to speak impiously, defame. They were twisting the word of God and even inventing doctrines to capture their audience. Remember what Paul wrote:

2 Corinthians 11

13 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ.

14 And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.

15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.

(NKJV)

It seems that they were not born-again and did not have the Spirit of God in them. They were still spiritually dead and had no clue concerning what they affirm about the Lord. As a result they speak evil of the God who they do not know at all.

The third description of false teachers found in verse twelve has to do with the wages for their sin of speaking evil of God.

(v.12) ...will in the destruction of those creatures also be destroyed,

They will not only perish but will UTTERLY perish. The judgment to come will be without any mercy. Wicked liars, professing to be men of God, they lead God's people astray. The fury of the Lord will fall upon them. There is no rest for the wicked.

Isaiah 48

22 "There is no peace," says the LORD, "for the wicked."

(NKJV)

Job 21

30 For the wicked are reserved for the day of doom; They shall be brought out on the day of wrath.

(NKJV)

They will perish because of their own sin. They were wolves in sheep's clothing. They were preying on God's children and will suffer the consequences. In verse thirteen, Peter continues to describe these false teachers.

¹³ suffering wrong as the wages of doing wrong. They count it a pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are stains and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, as they carouse with you,

Peter speaks of those who take '*pleasure*' (HEDONE) meaning: sensual delight, deceive, lust. These false preachers and teachers were like harlots whose foreheads were hard as stone. They were not ashamed of what they did. It is written that they took pleasure '*to revel in daytime*'. The word '*revel*' (TRUPHE) means: to enfeeble the mind and body by indulgence, debauchery. They were openly living a life of sin, even in the daytime. Usually people hide their debauchery and do it in nighttime, but not these false teachers! How often do we hear today of men and women who declare themselves inspired teachers and preachers and live lives of debauchery! Peter describes what these people are like. They resemble '*stains*' (SPILOO) meaning: to stain or soil. They soil what they do and are unable to 'keep clean' in speech or action. They are also like '*blemishes*' (MOMOS) figuratively meaning: a disgraceful person. Instead of being an example of holiness they mimic living in the desires of the flesh.

(v.13) ... as they carouse with you.

Carouse (SUNEUCHEO) means: to entertain, to feast with. I do not believe that it is sexual debauchery that was done in daylight but more likely – drinking! It seems that these false teachers loved to “party” during the day and had absolutely no shame in doing so! One should always be on guard about the “life style” of someone who declares that he speaks for God! Is he a godly man? Do his actions reflect the character of the Lord Jesus?

Matthew 7

15 "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.

16 "You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thistles?

17 "Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.

18 "A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit.

(NKJV)

What they truly are is certainly not men of God! Again, remember what Peter calls them:

(v.13) ...They are stains and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, as they carouse with you,

They are spots and blemishes, filled with deceptions. Filthy, ugly and unwanted things – that’s what they are! The early Christians accepted them in their feasts and went to theirs – they were fools to do so. We should also be careful not to accept fools who mock God at our table!

In verse fourteen, Peter continues to describe these false teachers.

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

Here Peter speaks of their eyes and their hearts. Jesus warns us about our eyes and how destructive they can be for us as well as for others:

Matthew 6

22 "The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light.

23 "But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

(NKJV)

As for their eyes they should be filled with love and care but not so for the false teachers! Their eyes were *'full of adultery that never cease from sin'*. They are carnal and live for the flesh. They are strapped with chains of lust, sensually preying on women and those who lacked knowledge of the Holy Scriptures. Not only that - they actually were *'enticing unstable souls'*. The word *'enticing'* (DELEAZO) means: to entrap. They were actually looking out to see who they could prey upon. They are exactly like their spiritual father-the devil!

1 Peter 5

8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

(NKJV)

They took advantage and encouraged *'unstable souls'* (ASTERIKTOS) meaning: unfixed, facilitating. They took advantage of those who were not strong in the faith. They destabilized them into following their own patterns of sin.

As for their hearts they were *'trained in greed'*. The Bible has so much to say concerning the heart and one of the more well-known passages is the following:

Jeremiah 17

9 "The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?

10 I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his doings.

(NKJV)

Without the help of the Holy Spirit through repentance, there is absolutely no hope for mankind, because of the disposition of their heart. It is deceitful and wicked. These false teachers have such a heart and that is why they do these things mentioned by Peter. They do not fall into sin once in a while (like we all do) but their hearts are *'trained in greed'*.

The word '*trained*' (GUMNAZO) means: to train. Like an athlete they are determine to be the best at what they do! They train themselves at '*greed*' (PLEONEXIA) meaning: avarice, fraudulency and extortion. They do it over and over again, they love it and live for it. Their hearts beat to the rhythm of these sins and they just can't get enough of them!

In fact they are not children of God but rather '*accursed children*'. The word '*accursed*' (KATARA) means: imprecation, curse. You might find that Peter uses a language that is too strong! Be reminded of what the apostle Paul wrote:

1 Corinthians 16

22 If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed. O Lord, come!

(NKJV)

Galatians 1

8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.

9 As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.

(NKJV)

All three times, the word '*accursed*' (ANATHEMA) meaning: excommunicated or accursed, is used. Like Peter, the apostle Paul teaches us the gravity of preaching another gospel. The judgment of God is upon them! And Peter tells in his letter why they are accursed children.

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

First of all they are accursed because they have refused the right way and preferred to go astray. They did not say like Joshua did:

Joshua 24

15 "And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

(NKJV)

Secondly they are accursed because they followed the way of Balaam – the false prophet of old.

(v.15) ...having followed the way of Balaam, the *son* of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;

¹⁶ but 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.

In Numbers 22-24 Balaam was asked by Balak to curse the Jewish people and he was willing but God forbade him to do so. These N-T false teachers bring disaster upon the people who listen to them and they also do it for money and sensuality (as we have seen). God used a donkey to speak to Balaam! It took a miracle for this man to stop being a false prophet! Still today, it takes a miracle, for one of these men or women to repent of their evil ways and come to the saving truth of Jesus Christ. Did not the Lord also use a miracle to stop Saul from spreading his evil desires against the followers of Christ? Was he not blinded by the light? Did he not hear the voice of Christ telling him that what he was doing was wrong? Was he not met by a man who laid his hands on him so that he could retrieve his eyesight? Yes God is still at work and the eyes and heart of countless men and women are still being opened today.

In verse 17, Peter tells his readers what their final outcome is.

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

These evil men are like '*springs without water*' – totally without any substance, and totally useless – all dried up with no life giving water in them. They are of no spiritual use.

These men are also a *'mist driven by a storm'* – just passing, appearing to be something but finally just carried off! They have no anchor and no substance. They are pushed *'by a storm'*. They are not the storm, our spiritual enemy is. They are puppets in his hands. He pulls on their strings and they follow his desires. Peter tells of their final outcome:

(v.17) ...for whom the black darkness has been reserved.

This is what their eternal abode will be like. Peter calls it *'the black darkness'*.

The word *'black'* (SKOTOS) means: obscurity and the word *'reserved'* (TEREO) means: to guard, to keep an eye on. Jesus speaks of this *'darkness'* in Mat. 8:12; 22:13; 25:30. It always refers to the final judgment. There is a place reserved for all false prophets and teachers. It is in pitch black darkness for all eternity!

So, we should be careful of these false teachers whether they are men or women. We should not invite them to our table (or accept them if you prefer). They only seek after sin and lust and have nothing to do with God. We should not be afraid of them but we should be careful of them and their traps!

2nd Peter
08 – False teachers *3
2:18-22

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

In this section Peter continues to warn us about the false teachers who infiltrate churches and take advantage of God’s people. In our last section we have seen the final outcome of these great sinners – *‘blackness of darkness forever’*. In this section, Peter will also speak about what they say, for their speech is their main instrument of deceit. The word of God tells us to *beware* of what comes out of their mouths. We see this in the following verses.

Matthew 16

**11 "How is it you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread? -
-but to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees."**

**12 Then they understood that He did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread,
but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees.**

(NKJV)

Colossians 2

8 Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.

(NKJV)

If we go back to our text we will see what Peter tells us to beware of:

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,

Peter speaks of their oratory skills – they really knew how to capture an audience:

¹⁸ For speaking out arrogant *words*

The idea behind '*arrogant*' (HUPEROGKOS) in Greek is: bulging over, great swelling. Their fancy words and beautiful phrases would captivate people. They would be mesmerized by what they heard. Some people are naturally great orators like Apollos was.

Acts 18

24 Now a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus.

(NKJV)

With these false prophets and teachers there was something deadly wrong with what came out of their mouths!

(v.18) ...words of vanity

The word '*vanity*' (MATAIOTES) means: moral depravity, transient. These majestic sermons were empty of all truth, worth absolutely nothing and meaningless. Instead of uplifting its hearers these '*words of vanity*' would actually draw the crowds away from the Living God. An example of this is found in the book of Proverbs.

Proverbs 5

3 For the lips of an immoral woman drip honey, And her mouth is smoother than oil;

4 But in the end she is bitter as wormwood, Sharp as a two-edged sword.

(NKJV)

Not only were these words empty – they were a danger to the hearers! Peter tells us how they were a grave danger.

(v.18) ...they entice by fleshly desires

They '*entice*' (DELEAZO) meaning: to entrap, allure. Their sermons are traps set up to catch you like a fish on a hook. Actually some fish baits are called "*lures*"! These lures look like little fishes ready to be eaten and when a fish sees it and snaps at it – they get caught by the hidden hooks! The lures that these false teachers used were the lures of '*fleshly desires*' (SARX) meaning: the flesh, the body as opposed to the soul. They would speak of exciting, enticing things. They stirred up and aroused the senses of the flesh to catch you!

Their sermons were in complete contrast with the teachings that we find in the Scriptures. How often we read that we need to overcome our fleshly desires and to put to death our flesh. We are told that there is a battle between the flesh and the Spirit of God in the believer. The apostle Paul describes this very personal battle of the flesh in his own life.

Romans 7

14 For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin.

15 For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do.

16 If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good.

17 But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.

18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find.

19 For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice.

20 Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.

21 I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good.

22 For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man.

23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

24 O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?

25 I thank God--through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.

(NKJV)

They do this ‘by sensuality’ (EPITHUMIA) meaning: a longing especially for what is forbidden. Like Eve was enticed by Satan to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge so these false teachers entice people by accepting what is forbidden by the Lord!

These false teachers aim at one specific group of people.

(v.18) ... those who barely escape from the ones who live in error

Like wolves who prey on the weak and the sick, these people aim their sights on those who are also weak in their faith or those who are newborns in the kingdom. They will not attempt to strike at those who are knowledgeable or solidly standing on the Scriptures (2 Tim. 2:15) but at the feeble and fragile souls. These false teachers want believers “back” in their fold to once more have control over them. What do these men promise to their listeners? What do they offer that “tickles” the ears?

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

They are ‘*promising*’ (EPAGGELIO) meaning: to announce upon, to assert, to profess. Their messages were based on promises that they were making. Freedom seemed to be a recurring theme, being your own authority, having no master to tell them what to do. The word ‘*freedom*’ (ELEUTHERIA) means: liberty, licentious.

Doesn't that sound like what happened in the Garden of Eden, when Satan offered a *freedom* that God did not want to give them! So these wicked false teachers are just following the pattern that Satan had set with our first parents. They promise liberty but do they deliver it? Absolutely not and this is why!

(v.19) ...while they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved.

They can not keep their promises of giving freedom to their audience simply because they themselves have not been liberated! They are still *slaves of corruption*. The word '*slaves*' (DOULOS) means: a slave, to be subjected. Jesus calls people like these the '*blind leading the blind*' (Mat. 15:14). They were slaves of '*corruption*' (PHTHORA) meaning: decay, ruin, to perish. Since all their knowledge is false and corrupt the only fruit they can produce is corruption. Jesus said the following:

Matthew 7

16 "You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles?

17 "Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.

18 "A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit.

19 "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

20 "Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

(NKJV)

There is no true freedom, through these false teachers, nor any real liberation only slavery of corruption is what is guaranteed! So when a person speaks in the name of God – be on the look out to see if he himself is still a slave of corruption. If he is, don't listen to him! There is a great lesson to be learned for any believer in Christ.

(v.19) ...for by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved.

We need to be very careful and disciplined in life. It is very easy to slowly slip into bad habits or sins. Many Christians walk too close to the edge of what is permissible and by doing so they wobble from one side of the ‘line’ to the other. That is why we are told the following concerning our everyday life:

- Walk in the steps of faith (Rom. 4:12)
- Walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:4)
- Do not walk according to the flesh (Rom. 8:1)
- Walk properly (Rom. 13:13)
- Walk by faith and not by sight (2 Cor. 5:7)
- Walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16)
- Walk worthy of your calling (Eph. 4:1)
- Do not walk as the rest of the Gentiles (Eph. 4:17)
- Walk in love (Eph. 5:2)
- Walk as children of light (Eph. 5:8)

Verse twenty can be confusing depending on who the “THEY” are.

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

Some believe that the “THEY” are the false teachers. The text would be difficult to analyze since Peter has already told us that *‘the black darkness has been reserved’* for them (2:17). This leaves us with the other “THEY” – the believers who the false teachers bring into bondage (v.19). This makes the text easier to understand and more theologically sound.

(v.20) ...have escaped the defilements of the world

These believers had *“escaped the defilements of the world”*. The word *‘escaped’* (APOPHEUGO) means: to escape. A perfect picture of what this means is given by the author of the book of Hebrews:

Hebrews 2

3 how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him,

(NKJV)

The people had not neglected *'so great a salvation'*. They had heard the gospel and they believed. They had escaped what Peter calls *'defilements'* (MIASMA) meaning: foulness, pollution. They were freed from the evil and dark things of this world for they had passed from the *'power of darkness into the kingdom of the Son of His love'* (Col. 1:13). They had done this:

(v.20) ...by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,

It was Christ who had won the victory for them at the cross. Christ had died for their sins and not only that, he had risen from the grave. He manifested himself to his disciples and they truly believed. Salvation is granted only through the person of Jesus for he is the only mediator between God and man (1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 8:6; 9:15; 12:24). What happened is that these Christians listened to false teachers and fell into their hands – they now believed false teachings. As a result they became *"entangled and overcome"*. Their true freedom in the truth of Christ was replaced by falsehood.

(v.20) ...they are again entangled in them and are overcome,

The word *'entangled'* (EMPLEKO) means: to entwine, tangled up. We can imagine what Peter is describing. Each lie they believed became a rope that restrained them. Each lie they accepted as truth held them tighter and tighter until they lost their true freedom found in Christ. This reminds me of certain churches that are very legalistic. They may be filled with true believers but they are restricted in what they do. They are told how to dress, where to go, what to buy, whom they can visit and so forth. They are choking under 'church rules and regulations' and the happiness and liberty of their salvation is lost!

Their present state has changed now it is *"worst for them than the first."*

(v.20) ...the last state has become worse for them than the first.

Their lives are worse now than they ever were! When one is not born-again he normally likes the life of sin and immorality that he is living. His soul is not bothered that much by all the darkness that surrounds him. Most of the time he is comfortable for he is part of 'the world'. When a person is born-again however his heart and mind are renewed.

Having received the Holy Spirit he begins to see the darkness that he was once in. Naturally he is prompted by the Spirit to leave his old habits and sins and live for the Lord. He now enjoys a new life, a life of walking in the light. However when a person who is born-again is subjected to darkness his heart is exposed to the ways of the world but this time he no longer enjoys them. Since he no longer walks in the light his life, become worse than before he was saved. There is no unhappier person on earth than he who belongs to the Lord and lives on the ‘wide road’. He gets no true happiness in life! Peter tells the following:

²¹ For 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.

They knew the truth “*the way of righteousness*” and now they have turned ‘*away from the holy commandment handed on to them*’. These Christians know the ways of the Lord but they have listened to these false teachers. They were enticed in their flesh by these new teachings. They found them to be good, just like Eve with the fruit in the Garden of Eden. So they accepted what was taught to them. As we have said before instead of drawing nearer to God, these false teachers draw men away from the Lord – so they have turned ‘*away*’. They walked on a different road, followed a different path and they became astray. This reminds me of people who Paul had to deal with in his ministry, who turned away from God once having known Him. One of them was a young man in 1 Corinthians who slept with one of his father’s concubines! Paul tells the Corinthians to:

1 Cor. 5

4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,

5 deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

(NKJV)

Can you imagine how much worse his situation was now! Being led away by the sins of the flesh he was now handed over to Satan! Another example of people turning away are the young widows who have turned from God.

1 Timothy 5

14 Therefore I desire that the younger widows marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully.

15 For some have already turned aside after Satan.

(NKJV)

Paul also speaks of two Christians who he delivered to Satan because of their sinful lives.

1 Timothy 1

19 having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck,

20 of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.

(NKJV)

All these people who were mentioned, now lived lives that were worse than what they knew before they turned to Christ. Willingly rejecting the ways of the Lord after knowing Him, is a terrible thing to do! I am not speaking of the person who fails in some way or another and repents of his sins – he is back in fellowship (1 John 1:8-10). I refer rather to the person who turns his back on the Lord by constantly living in a way that dishonors him.

Peter ends with a common saying of the day, which pictures exactly what these Christians do as they turn away from the beauty and holiness of Christ.

²² It 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.”

False teachers are compared to “*brute beasts, spots, blemishes, carousers and accursed children*” – as we have seen in our previous section. The Children of God who abandon the Lord for the joys of this world are compared to dogs that return to their own vomit, or to pigs that return to their own mud or bog. This is not a complement. When we understand what the Lord Jesus went through to cleanse us from our sins we understand better. How terrible it must be for Christ to see his beloved get all dirtied by sin because they enjoy it!

So let us be careful not to listen to these false prophets and also be careful not to return to the world that the Lord has taken us out of. Never forget what Paul wrote:

1 Corinthians 6

20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

(NKJV)

1 Corinthians 7

23 You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men.

(NKJV)

2nd Peter
09 – The promises of God
3:1-9

This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you in which I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, ² that you should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior *spoken* by your apostles.

³ Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with *their* mocking, following after their own lusts, ⁴ and 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.” ⁵ For 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, ⁶ through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water. ⁷ But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

⁸ But 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. ⁹ The 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.

(NASB)

We are getting closer to the end of this epistle and Peter is changing the subject. His focus will turn from the false teachers to the wonderful promises of God! He now turns away from what is false to remind the Christians what is true and what will remain true until – well forever and ever! In the first verse of chapter three, Peter tells the disciples the reason why he wrote this letter to them.

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

Peter calls the Christians ‘*beloved*’ (AGAPETOS) meaning: well loved. In chapter three, Peter will use this word five times! He truly is expressing his love for them. Expressing our love for others is an extremely important doctrine. Jesus calls this his ‘new commandment’ (John 13:34). Paul says that our love should be without any hypocrisy (Rom. 12:9).

The writer of Hebrews writes about ‘the labor of love’ the Christians have (Heb. 6:10). James tells us about the golden rule: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself’ (James 2:8). In his first letter, Peter writes the following: ‘love the brotherhood’ (1 Peter 2:17). John writes about ‘the love of God being perfect’ in them’ (1 John 2:5). By having this loving attitude, Peter is simply manifesting that the love of God is truly in him. May I ask if this unselfish love is alive in you? Are you carried by this sense of particular affection for others?

(v.1) ...I am writing to you in which I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder,

‘*Stirring up*’ in Greek (DIEGEIRO) means to: to awake fully, to arouse. By writing this, Peter wants to “wake the Christians up”! It just goes to show that we all need to be “wakened-up” once in a while. I wonder, if Peter had in mind when he also needed to be wakened up that night, in the Garden of Gethsemane. More than once, Jesus had found Peter asleep while he should have stayed awake with him while he prayed (Mat. 26:40,43,45). We all need to be stirred to get our minds on the move! Peter talks about ‘*your sincere mind*’. The word ‘*sincere*’ (EILIKRINES) means: tested as genuine, judged by sunlight. In ancient times, people would sometimes ‘cheat’ their customers who bought pottery. It happened that when the clay was baked it would crack. The potters would fill the cracks with wax and when the piece of pottery was painted no one would see the defect. To be certain of the value of the pottery a person would examine it by placing it before the sunlight. The bright light would then manifest all the cracks that were hidden by the paint. It seems that Peter is saying that their minds had passed the test of the light. These were true brethren in the faith that he is writing to.

It was the ‘*mind*’ that was sincere. The word ‘*mind*’ (DIANOIA) means: deep thought, the faculties. In Mat. 22:37 Jesus speaks of the importance of people loving God with all their minds – with all their intellectual capacities. Paul writes that before salvation, believers were alienated from God because of their minds”

Colossians 1

21 And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled

22 in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight--

(NKJV)

After they are saved by the precious blood of Jesus, their minds have changed and no longer should be an instrument of separation from God. Quite the contrary! Their minds are now to be used to glorify God. He explains this in the following text:

Romans 12

1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

(NKJV)

Peter desires to be '*stirring up*' the brethren and he tells us how he plans to do this.

(v.1) ... by way of reminder

The word '*reminder*' (HUPOMNESIS) means: a reminding, a recollection. Peter wants to shake the dust off their memories. It does not take time before the dust of life covers the wonderful recollections that we have of the Lord's commands or of His interventions in our life. We all need reminding, it's just part of our nature to forget and slide away from our spiritual goal in life. So Peter writes and so can we also write to encourage people in the faith. A card, letter or Email can really be uplifting when it comes at the right time. If you know of someone who needs encouraging or is falling away – it may be that he is just waiting for you to write to him! I remember when a man in the church had not come for a few months so I went to see him. I asked 'Why have you been absent for such a long time'? His surprising answer was 'I wanted to see how long it would take before you would come and see me!' As a pastor that was quite a lesson for me.

This is the second time that Peter tells his readers that he wants to remind them (2 P. 1:12-15)

¹² Therefore, 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. ¹³ I 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. (emphasis added)

So far in this letter, what is it exactly that Peter wants to ‘*remind*’ his readers of? We have seen three subjects: false prophets, false teachers and false doctrines. Starting in chapter three, Peter wants them to be reminded of something even greater, and of more importance!

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

He wants them to ‘*remember*’ (MNAOMAI) which means to have a fixture in the mind, to bear in mind, to recollect. This gives the same idea as what is written in verse one by – ‘*stirring up*’. What is it that we should keep in mind, fix our minds on or recollect in our mind?

(v.2) ...the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior *spoken* by your apostles.

Prophets spoke ‘*beforehand*’ (PROEREO) meaning: to say already, tell before. Some believe that what is really important for us is what is written in the New-Testament. Some Christians have very little knowledge of what is written in the Old-Testament. Somehow they think that it is irrelevant for them. Peter tells them that this is so! He says that believers NEED to be reminded of what the prophets have spoken about. So open the pages of the Old-Testament. The Bible is all of God’s word not only the New-Testament. Peter also writes that the apostles spoke for and in the name of God. These are also the things that should be kept in mind. Our minds can be so cluttered with debris of this world that they have little space for what’s truly important – spiritual matters! Our mind is like a computer that once in a while has to be defragmented which takes away all unnecessary information and deletes it! Wouldn’t it be wonderful if we could just ZAP away all the clutter that’s stuck in our minds!

Knowing the danger of a worldly cluttered mind, the apostle Paul wrote the following:

Philippians 4

8 Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy--meditate on these things.

(NKJV)

We are now entering the promises of God – promises that we need to daily remind ourselves of.

³ Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with *their* mocking, following after their own lusts, ⁴ and 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.”

Peter, speaks about the ‘*last days*’. We can wonder when these ‘*last days*’ will arrive or was he speaking about the days that they were already in. I believe an important clue to this question can be found in what Peter said on the day of Pentecost:

Acts 2

16 "But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

17 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams.

18 And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy.

(NKJV)

Peter is declaring that the prophecy of Joel has come true, that they were witnesses of what God had said. Notice that Joel prophesizes that ‘*in the last days*’ this miraculous event would happen.

We can understand by this that the day of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon believers on the day of Pentecost was the beginning of a new era called *'the last days'*. It seems to be that in God's calendar, we have entered a last phase of events. As we will see, this does not mean that all will be done in one stroke but rather that events have begun to move forward until the re-establishment of all things as they should be.

Peter reminds believers that there will ALWAYS be *'mockers'* when it comes to the Messiah and the Bible. The word *'mockers'* (EMPAIKTES) means: to deride, mocker or scoffer. People who laugh-off the idea that Jesus was the Messiah and that he will return. People are amused to think that we actually believe what the Scriptures teach. How many times have we met people who "shook their heads" and had a "little smile" when we spoke of Christ? How many have told us that the Bible is just a book of fairy tales and so forth. These are mockers and they walk,

(v.3) ...following after their own lusts

They don't know the truth and they don't really want to know the truth – they just want to keep on walking on the path they always have walked! They prefer *'their own lust'* (EPITHUMIA) meaning: a longing especially for something forbidden. Their hearts are set on the things of the world and never a thought is given to the eternal aspect of life. Verse four tells us what they mock about.

⁴ and 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."

They laugh at the thought that Jesus will come back: *'Where is the promise of His coming?'* The return of Jesus has always been a heated subject in Christendom. Some say he has returned by living in our hearts. Others believe that he will come back only after the universal church will establish his kingdom on earth. Still others say that he will come back but at a time that only the Father knows (Mark 13:32). Some believe that he will come before the great tribulation while others only at the end. What the Bible asserts is that the Messiah WILL COME BACK. What believers need to do is to wait for his return and be ready for it.

They say things have never changed and they never will: *'all continues just as it was from the beginning or creation'*. Does that remind you of someone you know or have heard of? People have always mocked the promises of God UNTIL he struck them.

- Adam & Eve mocked God and they were thrown out of Paradise.
- Cain mocked God by killing his brother and God marked him on the forehead.
- People mocked the prophet Noah and the floods destroyed them.
- People of Sodom and Gomorrah mocked God with their sexual debauchery and they were showered with burning hail and brimstone.
- The "Sons of Kore" mocked God and they were destroyed.
- King Saul mocked God and he killed himself.
- Judah mocked God and he hanged himself.

So many more names could be given, but people who laughed at God or mocked Him did so UNTIL they were struck by the Almighty. This is the same with people around us who mock God – when they will stand before Him, only a terrible judgment awaits them.

Revelation 20

11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them.

12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.

13 The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.

14 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

(NKJV)

Still today, people mock God and laugh at the thought of repentance. They live their lives as they desire and have their own gods and idols that they pray to and hope in. This does not change (and it never has) the fact that the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God

of Israel is the only true God! All others are but idols (1 Cor. 8:1-6). What saddens me is the following:

⁵ For 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, ⁶ through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water.

What do people do in verse five? – They willfully forget! It is written '*it escapes their notice*'. They care so little about the true God, being so absorbed by their own desires, that the truth '*escapes their notice*'. They forget, not because of natural causes that occur as they grow older – they forget because THEY WANT to forget. They forget what happened in the past: the heavens, the earth and the great flood!

(v.5,6) ...by the word of God *the* heavens existed long ago and *the* earth was formed out of water and by water, ⁶ through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water.

Today many people laugh at people who believe in creation and the truth that there is an all-powerful Supreme Being that created this universe. They would rather believe that nothingness created itself!

These people also laugh at the idea of a great universal flood. How foolish they are to believe in this old tale – they say! Yet God wants us to remember these events because it will save us from another disaster to come. Countless have perished in the great flood and countless will also perish when the end-times come. This is not a laughing matter and as believers in Christ we should tell people of the coming of the end of the present age and the necessity of repentance and asking Christ to save them from this terrible Day of Judgment. Do you believe what Peter is writing about? Have you considered the fate of your family, friends and neighbors who have not come to saving faith? Do you understand, that if they die without Christ as their Savior, they will perish for all eternity, with no hope at all? This is what Peter wants his readers to always remember:

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

Notice what the heavens AND the earth are '*reserved*' by. Where does this power come from? What sustains all things, including the heavens and the earth? It is '*by His word*'. What held the heavens and the earth in the past, what is holding the heavens and the earth right now and what will hold and preserve the heavens and the earth UNTIL the very last – does not change. Just as God spoke and all things were created (Gen. 1 & 2), his word still keeps everything in motion.

The promise of God, is that one day – there will come another cataclysm unlike the first (the flood) but a far more devastating one. We see that the '*heavens and the earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men*'. After all the universe is totally destroyed – then comes the last judgment for all of those who are *ungodly*! God promises, that one day, this entire world and everyone who was born of sin and did not repent, will be judged and be done away with! The outcome of this, will be eternal justice, harmony and peace! All true believers should be waiting for that day – but it seems to be taking so long! Has God forgotten his promise? Has he had second thoughts about his promise? Has he regretted his promise? The answer lies in verses eight and nine.

⁸ But 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. ⁹ The 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.

We forget that God's time-line is not like ours. Eighty or ninety years is such a long time! This is true for us but not so for the Lord!

⁸ But 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.

There is '*one fact that escape your notice*'. It also happens that believers are forgetful. We can be so occupied by various things that certain things are just not present in our minds any longer. Peter wants the believers to remember this specific fact. It is so important for them to understand. A "split second" for the Lord is like a thousand years for us – there is no comparing! Actually, because God is eternal, he is not affected by time. We might find

that it is taking a long time for the Lord to act, there are so many injustices, wars, crime and hideous things that are happening. Why doesn't he stand up, where is He? God is not delaying his promise, quite the contrary. He is not slack but desires what in verse nine?

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.

He is not slow – rather He *'is patient toward you'*. He wants all to come to repentance and not to perish! The word *'wishing'* (BOULOMAI) means: to will, be willing, be disposed. God is disposed to accept all who come to Christ with a repentant heart (John 6:37). God is long-suffering – very patient! God does not desire for *'any to perish'* (APOLLUMI) meaning: to destroy fully. God sent His Son to judge the world and to save those who come to Him (John 3:16). What God desires from us is *'for all to come to repentance'*. The word *'repentance'* (METANOIA) means: a reversal of one's decision. God is waiting for men and women to change their minds about the Messiah and their need for him. The day will come; the prophets have spoken of it and the apostles also, when the patience of God will come to an end. Then, as of old, the earth will perish and the souls of men will come to judgment.

May we rejoice in the promises of God that all those who are “in Christ” are safe and sound. They are just as safe as those who were in the ark when the great flood came.

2nd Peter
10 – The Day of the Lord
3:10-13

¹⁰ But 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.

¹¹ Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, ¹² looking 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! ¹³ But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

(NASB)

To continue with the promises of God – there is one that Peter absolutely does not want the disciples to forget. Actually, believers should never forget anything that comes from the Lord. Unfortunately, for the human heart, it seems that some promises are more encouraging than others. There are promises that as Disciples of Christ and living in the light we will suffer because of our testimony (Mat. 10:25). Verses concerning the difficult life of a true Christian abound. Paul, reminding Timothy, promises the following:

2 Timothy 3

12 Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

(NKJV)

In this section, Peter desires to be encouraging by describing what believers can look forward to in the “Day of the Lord”. Let’s not forget that these Christians were living under great stress and had suffered great loss.

In his first letter, his address to his readers was:

1 Peter 1

1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,

(NKJV)

He wrote to Christians, who had been scattered all over because of the cruelty of the Roman Empire. He also speaks of their difficult living conditions.

1 Peter 1

**6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials,
(NKJV)**

These Christians had become outcasts and were haunted down by the Roman authorities. Rome had even made a law saying that “To anyone that denounces a Christian once they were captured the Christians’ property and belongings would become theirs!” Imagine how this enticed every non-Christian to denounce those they believed to be followers of Christ! Part of Rome had also burnt down by the great fire and Nero, in his madness, blamed the Christians for this. The Coliseum held games where Christians were fed to wild tigers and lions. At night, tortured Christians were tarred and were lit up as torches for people to see their way! So you can imagine why God’s promises were so important to remember! Peter ends his epistle with one of the greatest promises. What a great promise Peter reminds his persecuted readers of in verse ten!

¹⁰ But 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.

Peter speaks concerning the day of the Lord. The “Day of the Lord” was a popular recurring theme of the prophets in the O-T and many had spoken about this coming event. Prophets such as: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Zephaniah, Zechariah and Malachi spoke of this coming day. As I said “The day of the Lord” was a popular theme among the prophets. And we find this same theme in the N-T, where both Peter and Paul speak of this coming event. So let’s come back to our text and see what Peter teaches us about this coming day. In verse ten, there are four things said about this terrible day.

1. The Lord will come back as a thief in the night.

(v.10) ...¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief

Paul spoke of this day with the exact same theme:

1 Thessalonians 5

2 For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.

3 For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.

4 But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.

(NKJV)

Paul was also looking forward to this great day. He even gives some certain clues to the circumstances that will usher in this day. He does not want the believers to be ‘in the dark’ about it and be surprised by it. Still today it is important to understand that the return of Jesus and the re-establishing of all things is something that believers should look forward to. It is still our great hope in life! Are you ready for this day? Have you dealt with your sins and cried out to Christ to save you? If not this would be a dreaded day for you and all who mock the salvation given by grace in Christ Jesus. One thing we do know is that we *do not know* the day when this will happen.

Matthew 24

35 "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

36 "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.

(NKJV)

2. The heavens will pass away with great noise.

(v.10) ...in which the heavens will pass away with a roar

Have you ever been near an open mine or worked on some great construction project where dynamite was used – I have! I have worked in the great north of Canada, where solid rock was blasted from mountain sides. The sound of the blasting dynamite is petrifying. Even though your ears would be protected the sound still shook you up. I can not imagine the force of the sound when *'the heavens will pass away with a roar'*. Isaiah spoke of what will happen on that terrible day.

Isaiah 13

10 For the stars of heaven and their constellations Will not give their light; The sun will be darkened in its going forth, And the moon will not cause its light to shine.

11 "I will punish the world for its evil, And the wicked for their iniquity; I will halt the arrogance of the proud, And will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.

12 I will make a mortal more rare than fine gold, A man more than the golden wedge of Ophir.

13 Therefore I will shake the heavens, And the earth will move out of her place, In the wrath of the LORD of hosts And in the day of His fierce anger.

(NKJV)

3. There will be a collapse of all matter in the universe.

(v.10) ...the elements will be destroyed with intense heat

The whole universe will suffer a meltdown – all the elements will be affected and everything will change. It is the *'intense heat'* that will destroy the universe. It will be a day like no other. Imagine the power that the Lord has! Imagine the power that it takes to make all of this come true. How foolish mankind is to believe that they can escape the last judgment!

4. Both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.

(v.10) ...and the earth and its works will be burned up.

It seems that everything will “go up in smoke” – not leaving any trace of the world that has been. It is not only the universe that will be destroyed but also *‘its works’*. This gives the idea of all traces of sin. Every deed born of darkness will literally be wiped out of history. Remember what Peter wrote just a few verses before:

2 Peter 3

7 But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

(NKJV)

The “Day of the Lord” so far, does not seem to be a day that Christians can be looking forward to – the destruction of the universe! It is what comes after this destruction that should rejoice all believers.

In verse eleven, Peter warns us that if this is what God has reserved for the cosmos, we should be attentive with the direction of our very own lives here on earth!

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

Peter asks his readers *‘what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness’*. In other words, he is saying that believers should react to this fact and live accordingly. Peter says that their conduct should be first of all filled with *‘holiness’* ((HAGIOS) meaning: blameless, consecrated. Both terms fit well with the life of a believer. We should be ‘blameless’ in the sense of our walk with the Lord. Our deep desires should always be to please the Lord in all we do. Jesus spoke of two gates and two different roads. One road is wide and easy to walk on but its destination is destruction. The other gate is narrow and the road is difficult but its destination is true life.

Matthew 7

13 "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.

14 "Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

(NKJV)

Believers should also live in ‘*godliness*’ (EUSEBEIA) which means: piety, holiness. You may wonder what the difference between the two is! I would say that the difference with holiness and godliness could be this: Holiness is what we have received from God – his character and so forth. Godliness is OUR expression of the holiness we have received – the way we live before men! Peter says, that since all of the universe will one day be destroyed (which means that nothing is left), then our eyes should be fixed on the Lord God! He is eternal and his new kingdom will be eternal. In verse twelve, we find a repetition of what will happen on the “Day of the Lord”.

¹² looking 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!

But Peter adds another aspect of this coming day – he says that Christians should be:

- looking for that day
- hastening the coming day

When we are ‘*looking for*’ (PROSDOKAO) means: to watch or anticipate. Or when there is a ‘*hastening*’ (SPEUDO) means: to await eagerly. We get a sense that this event (the day of the Lord) is something that should be exciting for the child of God. It will be the beginning of a life without the presence of sin! Our bodies will be transformed into celestial bodies and all things will have passed away! Just as a prisoner eagerly wait for the day of his release so should the true believers in Christ await for their release from this world of sin and this body that enslaves us to sin.

Why, so far, does this “Day of the Lord” seem to be what is commonly called “The end of the world”? Simply because it is. Why look forward for that day and long for its coming? Peter tells us in verse thirteen:

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

We welcome “The day of the Lord” because of two things:

- There will be a new heaven and a new earth
- Righteousness will dwell

In other words God will reconstruct a new Universe where things will never be the same and all will be brand new! In this “brand new” place something special will happen, something will be that we have never seen before! Righteousness will make its dwelling in this new universe. We know that the cosmos is presently suffering under sin, that all is turned upside down. We know that darkness reigns in the hearts of men and that evil spirits do all they can to hurt mankind. On the Day of the Lord, however, all things will be restored and righteousness will take its rightful place. John gives a description of this in the book of Revelation.

Revelation 21

- 1 Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.**
- 2 Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.**
- 3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.**
- 4 "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."**
- 5 Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."**
- 6 And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.**
- 7 "He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.**

8 "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

9 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife."

(NKJV)

This is what the believers can look forward to in the "Day of the Lord". May the Lord come swiftly and reign once more.

2nd Peter
11 – The conclusion
3:14-18

¹⁴ Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless; ¹⁵ and consider *that* the longsuffering of our Lord *is* salvation—as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, ¹⁶ as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable *people* twist to their own destruction, as *they do* also the rest of the Scriptures.

¹⁷ You therefore, beloved, since you know *this* beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; ¹⁸ but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

To Him *be* the glory both now and forever. Amen.

(NKJV)

We have seen in our last section, that being with God our celestial Father and having all things restored to what they should be, is the promise all believers should be looking forward to! Seeing this ultimate promise that was given to all believers Peter once more encourages them to live in a way that glorifies the Lord. He begins with the word '*therefore*' which is in relation to what has just been written. The word '*therefore*' brings a link to the past writing and a conclusion to come.

(14) Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless;

Until the Lord comes back, disciples are to do these four things:

The first is '*looking forward to these things*'. Peter is reminding them that this is what should ultimately occupy your mind and fill your heart. The coming of the Day of the Lord is the living hope that should be deeply anchored in the soul and spirit of all true Disciples of Christ. As we have said everything will pass away and be destroyed by fire. Our treasure should be in heaven and not on this earth (Mat. 6:21).

The second is *'be diligent'*. Disciples of Christ should not waste their time on earth. We are servants of the Lord and we should be looking out for our Father's business. Remember what Paul wrote:

Ephesians 2

10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

(NKJV)

God has prepared good works for His children to perform. Our part is to be *'diligent'* with our spiritual eyes wide open. We should be ready to accomplish all that the Holy Spirit desires us to do.

The third is to be *'found by Him in peace'*. This speaks of our relationship with others. Children of God should be peace makers. Remember what Jesus said:

Matthew 5

9 Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God.

(NKJV)

We are called to be at peace not only with our brethren but also with the people who around us. Some may not desire to be at peace with us but it is our duty to have a peaceful attitude with others even our enemies (Luke 6:27).

The fourth is *'without spot and blameless'*. This speaks of the pureness of the believer's heart. Jesus teaches that all outward actions have their source in the heart. Let us not fool ourselves it is our hearts that need to be *'without spot and blameless!'*

Matthew 15

17 "Do you not yet understand that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and is eliminated?"

18 "But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man.

19 "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.

20 "These are the things which defile a man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man."

(NKJV)

The “Day of the Lord” will be fearful and dreadful for all who mock God, but rewarding for all his children. So it is a beautiful day for us, a day we should welcome and everyday pray for it to happen. Next, Peter reminds his readers of the grace of God towards them.

(15) and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation--as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you,

Peter wants the disciples to reflect, to consider the things of the Lord. We are so bombarded with facts, figures and information about this world that we can easily forget what is true and eternal. Earthly life can distance us from our spiritual source of life which is God.

- Wars and civil uprisings
- Earthquakes, tsunamis and other devastations
- World economics
- Religious extremists
- Health or family issues
- Work and friends

All these things and so many more can utterly draw us away from the Lord. Peter tells us to *‘consider’*, to ponder or contemplate on the following about the Lord.

(15) ...the longsuffering of our Lord

The long suffering (MAKROTHUMIA) meaning: longanimity, extremely patient, and forbearance, of our Lord is his immense patience especially with sinners! The Lord has been so patient with us that he is holding back his hand to bring an end to all of this.

Psalms 145

**8 The LORD is gracious and full of compassion, Slow to anger and great in mercy.
(NKJV)**

Why is he so patient? Would it not be better for his children to be with him and that all things would be restored? Peter says that the longsuffering of our Lord *'is salvation'*. The word *'salvation'* (SOTERIA) means: rescue, safety and deliverance. His patience is good for us. As our heavenly Father, His plan includes a lot of patience! Aren't we glad that the good Lord is patient? Can you imagine, if at the very moment we would sin, we would instantly be punished? Life would be terrible, even for His children. Amen that God is patient! Peter says that he wasn't the only one teaching about this, that Paul was doing the same.

**(15) ...as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him,
has written to you,**

Peter is humble enough to recognize that the heavenly wisdom given to Paul is sometimes difficult to understand. This is an important verse, because it manifests that Peter knew of the letters that Paul had written and that he agrees with them.

(16) as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.

Imagine, if Peter sometimes has difficulty with the depth of Paul's writing how it can be for other readers! He speaks of *'all his epistles'* Peter knew what Paul was teaching and whom he was writing to. We see that there were many epistles that were circulating among the Christian churches. Peter also speaks of people who twist these teachings.

which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction

This should be a warning for us not to be like these people. They were *'untaught'*. They had little knowledge of the things of God but that did not restrain them from criticizing Paul. Is it not the same today? People who actually know little about theology (although they may be very intelligent) speak against the Holy Scriptures. Peter also says that they are *'unstable'*. They do not seem to be anchored solidly on what they believe. This is a bit like the Athenians who Paul met, who had itching ears for any new philosophy (Acts 17:16-21). All that awaits these people who *'twist'* the Word of God is their *own destruction*. The "Day of the Lord" will not be for them a "day of deliverance" or a "day of great welcoming and joy" but rather a "day of destruction". Knowing all of this, we should act wisely and not imitate those going towards their perdition.

(17) You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked;

Again we see the idea of *'steadfastness'*, being on the lookout and not sleeping through life. The believers he is writing to are called *'beloved'* for the fourth time and what a beautiful name this is. Peter refers to the believers (including Paul) on seven occasions as beloved in both his epistles.

Beloved occurs twice in his first letter and five times in his second! Yes, we are beloved of God because we are "in Christ". We are called to not be *'led away with the error of the wicked'*. It is our duty to dig deeply in to God's Word and eat daily of this spiritual bread. All of this is for our own protection and encouragement!

**(18) but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.**

Growing in God and in our Savior Jesus Christ is one of our callings on earth. Growing the right way should be our delight. Peter describes our growing in two aspects:

- in grace
- in knowledge

Grace without knowledge can bring us into foolishness. Knowledge without grace brings us to have a heart of stone like the Pharisees had! Grace is written first because that's how God deals with all his children and how salvation is procured for us. Our knowledge must always be covered with grace. The final phrase could not have been written any better.

To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.

Yes to Him be the glory now and forever. I would like to end with two verses from Paul in his epistle to the Ephesians.

Ephesians 1:5,6

(5) having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

(6) to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved.

(NKJV)

And all God's people said: - AMEN -