

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER

Notes & Commentary from Classes Conducted at
West Side Church of God in Christ
Rockford, Illinois

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THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER

PREFACE

Blessings upon you, people of the most high God! What an awesome little book this is! Once you dig past the surface, there are wonderful spiritual nuggets for us to glean. I hope this study encourages you to dig deeper into the Word of God. **2 Peter 3:18** *But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.*

Pastor Maurice A. West

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At various times in this study, you may also find the following designations referring to reference material used to assist in putting together this study. Direct quotations will be shown in italicized text.

- **{Adam Clarke}** Adam Clarke’s Commentary on the Whole Bible
- **{David Guzik}** Pastor David Guzik. Enduring Word Ministries
- **{JF&B}** The Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary
- **{Matthew Henry}** Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible in One Volume
- **{Dake}** Dake’s Annotated Reference Bible

If other references, commentators, Internet sources, or Bible translations are used they will be identified in the text.

Introduction

WRITER: The writer was the apostle Peter and these men tell us why this is true:

{Charles Swindoll} *“Much ink has been spilled in modern times over the question of whether or not Peter was in fact the author of this book—the authorship of 2 Peter being the most disputed in the New Testament. But the burden of proof is always on those who doubt the*

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direct reference in the letter's first verse, and despite their efforts, scholars have not been able to marshal arguments persuasive enough for the wise believer to doubt the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture and dismiss the revelation of 2 Peter 1:1."

{Matthew Henry} *"The penman of this epistle appears plainly to be the same who wrote the foregoing ... inasmuch as he who wrote this epistle calls himself Simon Peter, and an apostle (v. 1), and says that he was one of the three apostles that were present at Christ's transfiguration (v. 18), and says expressly that he had written a former epistle to them, 3:1."*

{Adam Clarke} *"It is extremely difficult, even for a man of the greatest talents, to forge a writing in the name of another, without sometimes inserting what the pretended author either would not or could not have said; and support the imposture in so complete a manner as to militate, in not a single instance, either against his character or against the age in which he lived. Now, in the Second Epistle of St. Peter, though it has been a subject of examination full seventeen hundred years, nothing has hitherto been discovered which is unsuitable either to the apostle or the apostolic age. Objections, indeed, have been made on account of its style; but the style of the second epistle, when compared with that of the first, warrants rather the conclusion that both were written by the same person. We have no reason, therefore, to believe that the Second Epistle of St. Peter is spurious, especially as it is difficult to comprehend what motive could have induced a Christian, whether orthodox or heretic, to attempt the fabrication of such an epistle, and then falsely ascribe it to St. Peter."*

DATE: In our study of the prior epistle, we came to the conclusion that First Peter was written between 64-68 A.D. or at the latter part of the Apostle's life. After hearing from a few scholars (on the next page), we're still no closer to coming to a firm date of writing but that may not add to our study anyway and we do know that it was after First Peter.

{Dake} *"Perhaps written from Babylon about 61-65 A.D."*

{Charles Swindoll} *"Peter wrote this letter from Rome soon after he wrote 1 Peter in AD 64-66."*

{Word Bible Commentary} *"The date of composition has proven to be very difficult to determine. Commentaries and reference books have placed 2 Peter in almost every decade from 60 to 160 A.D."*

STATISTICS: {Dake} *"61st book of the Bible; 3 chapters; 61 verses."*

BACKGROUND AND WHY THIS BOOK WAS WRITTEN:

{Charles Swindoll} *"Peter's theme in his second letter is a simple one: **pursue spiritual maturity through the Word of God as a remedy for false teaching and a right response to heretics in light of Christ's promised second coming** (2 Peter 1:3, 16). When false*

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teachers begin to whisper their sweet words into the ears of immature Christians, the body of Christ begins to break apart, to lose what makes it distinctive in the first place—faith in the unique person and work of Jesus Christ. Peter repeatedly points to the Word of God as the primary means of growth for the Christian (1:4, 19–21; 3:1–2, 14–16). Peter encouraged his readers to apply themselves to acquiring the true knowledge of God and living out the life of faith with ‘all diligence,’ so that they may ‘be found by [Jesus] in peace, spotless and blameless’ (1:5; 3:14). And if believers did not follow his advice, they would be giving their Christian community over to the heretics, people who look to ‘exploit . . . with false words’ (2:3).”

{David Guzik} “1 Peter was written to encourage Christians under the threat of violent persecution; 2 Peter was written to warn those same believers of **the danger of false teachers and harmful influences.**”

{JF&B} “The twofold design of the Epistle is set forth; namely, to guard his readers against ‘the error’ of false teachers, and to exhort them to grow in experimental ‘knowledge of our Lord and Savior’ (2Pe 3:18). The danger now, as of old, was about to arise from false teachers, who soon were to come among them, as Paul also (to whom reference is made, 2Pe 3:15, 16) testified in the same region. **The grand antidote is ‘the full knowledge of our Lord and Savior,’ through which we know God the Father, partake of His nature, escape from the pollutions of the world, and have entrance into Christ’s kingdom.**”

AUTHOR’S NOTE: Throughout the text, I have added what I call “**Saints’ Principles**” (key points directed to all believers) and “**Leadership Principles**” (key points directed primarily to church leaders especially pastors). The intention of these principles is to point out truths, from my point of view, based on something that has occurred in the passage.

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Chapter 1

{Matthew Henry} “In this chapter we have, I. An introduction, or preface, making way for, and leading to, what is principally designed by the apostle (v. 1-4). II. An exhortation to advance and improve in all Christian graces (v. 5-7). III. To enforce this exhortation, and engage them seriously and heartily to comply with it, he adds, 1. A representation of the very great advantage which will thereby accrue to them (v. 8-11). 2. A promise of the best assistance the apostle was able to give to facilitate and forward this good work (v. 12-15). 3. A declaration of the certain truth and divine origin of the gospel of Christ, in the grace whereof they were exhorted to increase and persevere.”

OPENING GREETINGS

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

NLT This letter is from Simon Peter, a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ. I am writing to you who share the same precious faith we have. This faith was given to you because of the justice and fairness of Jesus Christ, our God and Savior. The “faith” mentioned here is not the “faith” that we exercise to believe God for healing, deliverance, or blessing. No, this is the faith we exercised at our coming to Christ in salvation. It is the “spiritual acceptance of truth or realities not (necessarily) certified by reason.” This is the “precious faith” that saved us and delivered us from a world of sin. He writes to the same audience as in the last book – {Adam Clarke} “God having given to you – believing Gentiles, the same faith and salvation which he had given to us – believing Jews.”

2 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, NLT May God give you more and more grace and peace as you grow in your

knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord. The NLT has expounded on this verse well but they eliminated a key word – “multiplied”. Our **grace** (God’s unmerited favor which He freely bestows and is designed for the recipient to obtain pleasure or joy) and **peace** (that harmonious relationship with God eliminating the guilt associated with sin) are **multiplied** (increased not through addition but through compounding) THROUGH the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ. Multiplication is a tool that God uses for blessing or for cursing:

- **Genesis 1:28 NKJV** Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and MULTIPLY; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” The key to filling the earth was the multiplication of the seed of Adam and Eve. But this is a mystery because the natural man thinks of pregnancy as ADDITION but if Eve had multiple children at each birth, then we understand the principle of multiplication.
- **Genesis 3:16 NKJV** To the woman He said: “I will greatly MULTIPLY your sorrow and your conception; In pain you shall bring forth children; Your desire shall be for your husband, And he shall rule over you.” Another of the mysteries of the period before the sin of Adam and Eve is the number of children they had before they sinned.

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If we only focus on Cain and Abel then we miss the multiplication principle in this verse. ADDITION can begin with nothing but MULTIPLICATION cannot. The mystery of compound growth in investments only works if you have *something* invested.

KEY: So after all of that, we see that the MULTIPLICATION of our GRACE and PEACE does not just make us better in Christ but allows us to make quantum leaps in our growth in Him. BUT, it comes through the knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord.

This word KNOWLEDGE comes from the Greek word *epignosis*, which means {Vine's Expository Dictionary} "*exact or full knowledge, discernment, recognition*" and goes beyond investigation. It refers to a greater participation by the knower in the object known and the object known (Christ) therefore influences you. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE:** We multiply God's favor and peace by our full and intimate knowledge of God and Jesus Christ His Son.

3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: NLT By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence. Because of the work of God, we have received everything that has to do with the God kind of life and participation with the very nature of God. But again, this comes from our knowledge of Him. How then will we know God and Jesus Christ? This is partially answered in verse 8 but we have some things to look at before we get there.

To me, the bigger issue in this verse is this – **Since we have EVERYTHING WE NEED FOR LIVING A GODLY LIFE, why do people turn away from Christ?** I don't want to get into it with those that believe that a person cannot backslide or leave Christ but I will just point out my notes on 1 Peter 4:18 (below) and then we'll move on.

18 And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? Will the righteous (key word) *scarcely* be saved? Is that the correct interpretation of this verse? Does that mean that some righteous WON'T be saved? The point of this verse is that there is an ongoing battle to please God and be ready for His eternal promise. Jesus answered this for us while still on earth: **Matthew 7:13-14 NKJV** ***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.*** He already said that, in spite of grace, the way would be difficult. The ongoing battle within us is RAGING let alone the battle against the world and demonic forces.

As to my questions, I leave you with another Word from the Lord Jesus and allow you to come to your own conclusion: **Luke 13:24 NLT** ***Work hard to enter the narrow door to God's Kingdom, for many will try to enter but will FAIL.***

I think the answer is clear. We turn from Christ because we don't know Him to the point where He influences our lives. In a great marriage, the husband and wife influence changes

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in the other person's life because of their knowledge of each other and their desire for the marriage to be successful. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE:** **If we want to be successful in Christ, we must know Him intimately and by personal experience.** It is for this reason that Paul wrote: **Philippians 3:10 NKJV** *that I may KNOW Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.* Paul desired to know Christ in a way that went beyond Bible study but included experiencing what Christ experienced.

4 *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.* The word "whereby" refers to "by means of something". So, "by means of something" we are given promises and this occurs by the means of God's power and our knowledge of Him as stated in verse 3. But there are two major things in this verse that are absolutely tremendous and need to be brought out:

- (1) By the power of God and by our intimate and personal knowledge of God and His Son Jesus Christ are given unto us extraordinarily immense and precious promises (declarations that something will or will not be done, or given by Someone).** These promises are what motivate and encourage us to live this life daily. I salute those making money from Bible promise books because we need to be reminded of what is already stored up for us in the Word of God. By these promises, we will be able to partake in the very nature of God because we have set our purpose to flee from this world's corruption that exists through their lusts.
- (2) We have the opportunity to share in the very nature (character, personality, temperament) of God.** What this means could fill books because everything the Scripture tells us about God becomes accessible to us. But before fear or pride overtakes you, let us at least attain, through this verse, the great and precious PROMISE made to us by the Lord Jesus: **John 14:12** *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, THE WORKS THAT I DO SHALL HE DO ALSO; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.*

SEVEN ATTRIBUTES FOR OUR GROWTH IN CHRIST

5 *And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;* **NLT** *In view of all this, make every effort to respond to God's promises. Supplement your faith with a generous provision of moral excellence, and moral excellence with knowledge.* The NLT's use of the word "supplement" makes these steps sound like they are optional but verse 9 warns us of the danger of not adding these attributes. They are NOT optional so we will go through each one but let's first start with how we should approach each one. The word DILIGENCE means to be constant in effort to accomplish what is

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undertaken; attentive; industrious; done with painstaking care and perseverance. It is not just work but very careful, painstaking work; it is the work of a master craftsman. This means a lot of people are working at their salvation but are not diligent because they are not using the tools that God has given. They don't treat their souls as precious. Diligence is the key. This is not a once and for all situation but one that recycles continuously until we come to the measure of a perfect man or woman. So now we know the work involved with adding, what do we add to our initial faith in Christ?

- **VIRTUE** – This refers to natural greatness, moral goodness, or uprightness. This represents the basics of Christian living. If you say you have believed Christ for your salvation, people should see Christ in your life. Whether you call it virtue, moral goodness, moral soundness, or holiness, it's all the same but it's the starting point.
- **KNOWLEDGE** – There is a different Greek word here for “knowledge” than used earlier. This term refers to general intelligence, understanding or investigation. The prior word for knowledge had to do with full and intimate knowledge but this word is more of a beginning investigation. A new Christian needs to find out what this life is about, what has happened to them, and what God expects from them. Therefore, a new Christian (and a seasoned one also) must be in a Bible teaching church – fully engaged and a full participant.

6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; NLT and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with patient endurance, and patient endurance with godliness,

- **TEMPERANCE** – This is nothing but self-control, the observation of moderation in ones emotions, thoughts, or acts; self-restraint. This ties right in with VIRTUE. Young Christians spend a lot of time asking themselves and others, “Is it a sin if...?” Temperance tells us to exercise self-restraint in all things. Some things may not be a sin but they don't help you in your Christian walk or in your witness for Christ.
- **PATIENCE** – Bearing pain or trial without complaining; sustaining afflictions with fortitude, calmness or submission; waiting with calmness. Once I start implementing the basics of Christianity through my basic knowledge of the Bible, now I need to work on some patience because everything I expect out of me (or out of the Lord) is not going to happen immediately. I need to “wait with calmness”. When people laugh at my decision for Christ, I need to “bear pain without complaining”.
- **GODLINESS** – This {Vine's Expository Dictionary} “denotes that piety which, characterized by a God-ward attitude, does that which is well-pleasing to Him”. This grace takes VIRTUE beyond the level of just being a “good person” to a person that

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pleases God in all things. The ultimate level of “godliness” was expressed by the Lord Jesus – **John 8:29 NKJV** *And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I ALWAYS do those things that please Him.*

7 *And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. NLT and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love for everyone.*

- **BROTHERLY KINDNESS** – These two words come from one familiar Greek word, *philadelphia*, which refers to love for the brethren as brothers and sisters. This was so important that the Lord Jesus emphasized this in one of His final discourses with His followers: **John 13:35 NKJV** *By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for ONE ANOTHER.*
- **CHARITY** – This is another familiar Greek word, *agape*. This word expresses the essential nature of God (I John 4:8). Charity is an unselfish love, ready to serve. I found it interesting that one commentator had a wonderful definition of “charity” including the fact that it excludes any type of bigotry even though he showed his disdain for a particular religion throughout his commentary. That is not the LOVE expressed here.

8 *For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.* What things must be in us and abound? The seven characteristics mentioned in verses 5 - 7 must be added to our faith. No matter how much we study, our character can keep us from the deep things of God, i.e., the deep knowledge and understanding of God. God shares these things with those that obey Him in these seven attributes.

9 *But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.* Your lack of these seven attributes is an indictment against your Christian life. There is both a reason and a result for your lack. The reason is that you’re blind. You have your focus on something else besides God. Something has distracted you. The result is that you have forgotten that you were once filthy also. How can we be so quick to judge someone else when we’ve come through similar things (all sinful) no matter how long we’ve been saved?

SEVEN ATTRIBUTES FOR OUR GROWTH IN CHRIST (POSTSCRIPT)

10 *Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, **ye shall never fall**: NLT So, dear brothers and sisters, work hard to prove that you really are among those God has called and chosen. Do these things, and **you will never fall away**.* We have the word “diligence” again. We talked about this in verse 5. (For a reminder, it means to be constant in effort to accomplish what is undertaken; attentive; industrious; done with painstaking care and perseverance.) **SAINTS’**

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PRINCIPLE: Friends, we have to be diligent (work HARD) about our souls. It's amazing how many people take a cavalier approach to their eternal (unending) destination! The promise, though, is wonderful. If we'll do this, we won't fall away. With this verse, there is some controversy regarding the doctrine of eternal security, also known as "once saved, always saved". I am not going to use this time to argue either point but I think it important to consider the Lord's final parable in Matthew 26:31-46 – the Parable of the Separation at the Last Day. The critical determining point for those that please God are those that DO something in the way of good works. {Adam Clarke} *"We find, therefore, that they who do not these things shall fall; and thus we see that there is nothing absolute and unconditional in their election. He who does not by good works confirm his calling and election, will soon have neither; and although no good works ever did purchase or ever can purchase the kingdom of God, yet no soul can ever scripturally expect to see God who has them not."*

11 For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amplified Bible Thus there will be richly and abundantly provided for you entry into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. There are two words, one in each translation, that we have to key on: KJV – everlasting; Amplified Bible – eternal. This points to our objective – eternal life. Therefore, let us be mindful of those that don't know Christ because their result will be eternal and everlasting also but it will be death. Let us not be selfish in focusing only on our destiny.

PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR TEACHING

12 Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. Message Bible Because the stakes are so high, even though you're up-to-date on all this truth and practice it inside and out, I'm not going to let up for a minute in calling you to attention before it. Today we are easily excited by "new" revelations received at our home churches or via television. However, we must be careful about what seems "new". The TRUTH has stood for centuries. And, because the "stakes are so high", it's important for us to go over them again and again and again. Professional football teams do not practice in all types of weather just for the sake of ego and personal gratification. No, they have a goal in mind of being able to play in one of the greatest games in the world, the Super Bowl. But if they don't practice and practice and practice, they will never get there. Likewise, if we don't continually go over what we've learned, we may not achieve the destiny we're looking for.

SAINTS' PRINCIPLE: Stop looking for "new" things! Have you mastered the "old" things?

13 Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; Message Bible This is the post to which I've been assigned—keeping you alert with frequent reminders—and I'm sticking to it as long as I live. As a pastor, I

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personally find this verse exciting because it reminds me that this is my role and even if it bores the people, I MUST keep them alert with frequent reminders! Sometimes, I, like other pastors, fret over coming up with something “new” for the people when they have not yet mastered the “old”. Like the Apostle, this is the role to which I’ve been assigned so I relish in that.

14 Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me. NLT For our Lord Jesus Christ has shown me that I must soon leave this earthly life. Death was near for the Apostle. He, like Paul, was “connected” to God in such a way that He let him know when his time was nearing an end. Wouldn’t it be wonderful if we all had that type of relationship so we could clean up lingering earthly and spiritual matters so our transition would be easier on everyone? Unfortunately, we don’t all have that privilege.

15 Moreover I will endeavor that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance. Amplified Bible Moreover, I will diligently endeavor [to see to it] that [even] after my departure (decease) you may be able at all times to call these things to mind. I’ve seen too often that many don’t do this. I have great respect for my father in the Gospel but I only have a single message of his and none of his teaching. If one were to ask me, “What were his thoughts on this verse?” I could not answer. It wasn’t written down and what I wrote down has been lost over the years. Sometimes we blame things on lack of technology that should be blamed on lack of diligence. If Peter could say this over 2,000 years ago, why can’t we say this now? **LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLE: Leaders, what are you doing to make sure the special revelations and Biblical insights you have received are not lost after your departure?**

IN SPITE OF OUR OPPOSITION, THE GOSPEL IS THE TRUTH

16 For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. NLT For we were not making up clever stories when we told you about the powerful coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. We saw his majestic splendor with our own eyes. This is a tough time we’re in as the Church of Jesus Christ and, sadly, it’s tough in a country that claims to be a Christian country. When we take a stand for what we believe, we’re called, among other things, insensitive, backwards, and unyielding. However, when other religions take the same stand, they are respected for honoring what is right to them. Let’s do some “soul searching” before we go further into this text:

- Christian friend, do you live a life that says, “This is a fable”? If you do, your children will pick up the same thought and see no reason to continue in church when they reach adulthood.

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- Christian friend, do you live as if none of the things that Christ warned us of will come to pass? If you do you're deceiving yourself and putting your soul in jeopardy.
- Christian friend, when you're challenged on the "hot topics" of this day that are clearly wrong in the Scripture, do you back off or claim "That was for another time"? Does that attitude please God...or do you care?

The Apostle was so crystal clear with this – **WE ARE NOT FOLLOWING SOME CLEVER STORIES OR CLEVERLY DEvised FABLES!** No, he was an eyewitness to the majesty of Christ. This changed everything for him! He saw His splendor with his own eyes. I was not an eyewitness to that but I am an eyewitness to the IMMEDIATE changes He made in my life when I said, "YES!" to Him!

17 For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

18 And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. These verses tie in with the three versions of the Transfiguration of Jesus Christ recorded in Matthew 17:1-8, Mark 9:1-9, and Luke 9:28-36. It was at this time that the "inner circle" of the Lord Jesus (Peter, James, and John) saw His glory, His majesty, and His heavenly splendor. What was their eyewitness account of what they saw?

- **Matthew 17:2-3 NLT** *As the men watched, Jesus' appearance was transformed so that his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as light. 3 Suddenly, Moses and Elijah appeared and began talking with Jesus.* In this account, the Lord's appearance was so dramatically changed that His face was like looking into the sun. Even His clothing changed! And then Moses and Elijah (representing the totality of the Old Testament in the Law and the Prophets) appeared and began talking with the Lord.
- **Mark 9:2b-4, 6 NLT** *As the men watched, Jesus' appearance was transformed, 3 and his clothes became dazzling white, far whiter than any earthly bleach could ever make them. 4 Then Elijah and Moses appeared and began talking with Jesus. 6 He said this because he didn't really know what else to say, for they were all terrified.* The key to this account was that seeing the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ TERRIFIED these men who had walked, lived, and eaten with Him for all that time. There was something about this that was far beyond what their minds had conceived about who this man Jesus of Nazareth actually was.
- **Luke 9:29-32 NKJV** *As He prayed, the appearance of His face was altered, and His robe became white and glistening. 30 And behold, two men talked with Him, who were Moses and Elijah, 31 who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. 32 But Peter and those with him were heavy with*

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sleep; and when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men who stood with Him. I brought in this account for four key words: THEY SAW HIS GLORY. But they not only saw it, they HEARD what the three of them were talking about. In spite of hearing the conversation, every time after this that the Lord brought up His impending death at Jerusalem, they either didn't get it or rejected it.

19 *We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye **take heed**, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: **Amplified Bible** And we have the prophetic word [made] firmer still. You will do well to **pay close attention to it** as to a lamp shining in a dismal (squalid and dark) place, until the day breaks through [the gloom] and the Morning Star rises (comes into being) in your hearts.* {David Guzik} *“When we consider the prophetic testimony to Jesus, we do well to heed it. There are at least 332 distinct Old Testament predictions regarding the Messiah that Jesus fulfilled perfectly. The combination of this evidence together, from a simple statistical perspective, is absolutely overwhelming. [The late] Professor Peter Stoner calculated that the probability of any one man fulfilling eight of these prophecies is one in 100,000,000,000,000,000 (10 to the 17th power). That number of silver dollars would cover the state of Texas two feet deep.”* The “inner circle” of the Lord Jesus witnessed ONE event that stuck with them. From various sources, there are 300-450 Old Testament prophecies that point specifically to the Lord Jesus Christ as Messiah. This is a SURE word of prophecy. These are the prophecies to which we MUST take heed lest we endanger our souls! These prophecies are the reasons we give to others as to why we live this life.

20 *Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. **Amplified Bible** [Yet] first [you must] understand this, that no prophecy of Scripture is [a matter] of any personal or private or special interpretation (loosening, solving).* There are two approaches on this verse that really combine into one approach. Adam Clarke focuses on the **source** of the prophecy and that it did not come from the inventive mind of a person calling themselves a prophet, which directly ties this verse to the next. David Guzik focuses on the **interpretation** of the prophecy giving important insight into some of the problems of that day that yet exist: *“Even in Peter’s day, enemies of Jesus were twisting Old Testament prophecies, giving them personal and bizarre meanings so as to exclude Jesus from their fulfillment. But Peter says that prophecy is not of any private interpretation, but its meaning is evident and can be confirmed by others. Though Peter here speaks of prophecy of Scripture, the same principle is true for the gift of prophecy today. There must be sober confirmation of any prophetic word, and that not through another prophetic word, but*

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through the Scriptures.” In either case, the source and the interpretation must line up with the next verse and that is the standard for the prophet today.

21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. So as we close this chapter, let's look at a few quick points on the standard of prophecy (there are more in 1 Corinthians 14):

- (1) **It does not come by the will of man** – I am always skeptical of a prophetic word that lines up with an issue that the “prophet” has been trying to get across. For example, many years ago I received a “word” that I was to return to the city that I moved from less than a year earlier. Fortunately, before I blindly followed that “word” I received wisdom that showed that it was the will of that man and not the will of God. That's the danger in a prophet who is not answerable to someone.
- (2) **Holy men of God spoke** – Can you find obvious flaws in the life of the prophet? In other words, this person attempting to speak into your life **MUST BE HOLY!**
- (3) **Moved by the Holy Ghost** – In my example above, the Holy Ghost told me through my pastor to make the original move. Then a “prophet” UNDER that pastor told me to move back. God is NOT the author of confusion!

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Chapter 2

{Matthew Henry} “The apostle, having in the foregoing chapter exhorted them to proceed and advance in the Christian race, now comes to remove, as much as in him lay, what he could not but apprehend would hinder their complying with his exhortation. He therefore gives them fair warning of false teachers, by whom they might be in danger of being seduced. To prevent this, I. He describes these seducers as impious in themselves, and very pernicious to others (v. 1-3). II. He assures them of the punishment that shall be inflicted on them (v. 3-6). III. He tells us how contrary the method is which God takes with those who fear him (v. 7-9). IV. He fills up the rest of the chapter with a further description of those seducers of whom he would have them beware.”

THE DANGER OF FALSE TEACHERS

1 But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. NLT But there were also false prophets in Israel, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will cleverly teach destructive heresies and even deny the Master who bought them. In this way, they will bring sudden destruction on themselves. This verse links to the last verse in the prior chapter. Adam Clarke gives us the linkage: “There were not only holy men of God among the Jews, who prophesied by Divine inspiration, but there were also false prophets, whose prophecies were from their own imagination, and perverted many.”

But the main part of this verse begins a discussion that has far reaching impact, even to us today. In the Old Testament, there were false prophets. Peter prophesied that there would also be false prophets among the audience he was writing to. But this prophecy extends to today where there seems to be an abundance of false prophets and false teachers. Their message is slick and conniving so it can impact and infect the people of God. They work secretly because their target is in the Church and they don't want to be uncovered. They will go so far as to deny the Lord Jesus Christ, who, through His suffering, death, and resurrection, had purchased their souls. Because of this, they are working IN the Church and appear to be PART of the Church but they will not continue for their actions will bring swift and sudden destructive judgment upon them. This whole chapter is a warning against false teachers and false prophets.

2 And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. NLT Many will follow their evil teaching and shameful immorality. And because of these teachers, the way of truth will be slandered. The word “pernicious” refers to evil, destructive, and harmful ways. **And many shall follow their pernicious ways.** MANY will follow them? That's frightening! (David Guzik) “This reminds us that false teachers may be popular. Just because something ‘works’ in attracting a crowd of followers, it doesn't mean that it is of God.” Friend, we must take hold of this statement! **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE: JUST BECAUSE SOMETHING “SEEMS” TO WORK, DOESN'T MEAN THAT IT IS OF GOD!** I can't be stronger in this statement because we live in a generation of “crowd followers”.

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These false prophets and teachers will not only be unholy, as part of their pernicious ways, but they will also exhibit an immoral lifestyle. Why is that? They want the results of intimate time with God without the actual work that goes with it. Jude, a contemporary of Peter, wrote of these same people and how they would work IN the Church but be ungodly, lascivious, money loving people. Such an example in the New Testament was Simon, a sorcerer, in Acts 8. He offered Peter money to be able to lay hands on people so that they would receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:18-19). We often focus on his awful proposition but miss the fact that Acts 8:13 KJV says “**Simon himself believed also**” and was a part of the Church. But there are more characteristics to come that we must be aware of.

3 And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not. NLT In their greed they will make up clever lies to get hold of your money. But God condemned them long ago, and their destruction will not be delayed. How often I have seen this verse performed in today’s church! There are those that are greedy for money, YOUR money, and will use all types of “**clever lies to get hold of your money**”. What is so sad is that we are often deceived by these lies right in the church! God has a plan for their lives but we must be aware of their schemes while God’s judgment is on the way.

SIDE ROAD: Be careful with the verses we just examined. I have said in the past, “Just because a person prophesies does not make them a prophet.” Likewise, in reference to this verse, just because a person exhibits *some* of the attributes of a false prophet does not make them a false prophet. They may have a problem in a certain area but when you put them all together, the Scripture tells us that they are a false prophet. But even if they have a few of these attributes and show no inclination for repentance, **they are one to avoid.**

THE DOOM OF FALSE TEACHERS

Preamble: The next few verses (through verse 6) are there to tell us that God is not only love but God is also judgment. There is false teaching today that emphasizes His love to the exclusion of His role as Judge. But God knows how to punish as well as reward.

4 For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; Message Bible God didn’t let the rebel angels off the hook, but jailed them in hell till Judgment Day.

After resisting for a long time, I have come to the conclusion that I have been contradicting the majority of the Church. In a study of a prophetic book in the Old Testament, I had established a rule that where there was doubt about the interpretation of a passage, I would yield to the teaching of the Church in general. I have not done so when it comes to the subject of “angels that sinned” but from now on I will. The general teaching is that these angels are those sinned by intermarriage with mankind thereby creating a mutant race of “giants”. {Dake} “*It does not say here what sin they committed causing them to be*

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confined to hell, but Jude 6-7 and Gen. 6:1-4 tell us that they committed fornication living with the daughters of men contrary to their own nature. These angels committed sin beyond that of falling with Lucifer, for they are now confined to hell for that sin.” Let’s be clear on this. These angels remain captive in prison and will be there until the Great White Throne Judgment. They represent the worst of the devil’s demons. But Spurgeon warned us that we can sin WORSE than this: “I answer that the devil never yet rejected free grace and dying love; the devil never yet struggled against the Holy Spirit in his own conscience; the devil never yet refused the mercy of God. These supreme pinnacles of wickedness are only reached by you who are hearers of the gospel, and yet cast its precious message behind your backs.” But here is the key to this verse now that we understand its background: If God judged these angels, He WILL judge false prophets and false teachers.

5 And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; Message Bible Neither did he let the ancient ungodly world off. He wiped it out with a flood, rescuing only eight people—Noah, the sole voice of righteousness, was one of them. If God destroyed the entire earth in a flood except for EIGHT people, He WILL judge false prophets and false teachers.

6 And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; Amplified Bible And He condemned to ruin and extinction the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, reducing them to ashes [and thus] set them forth as an example to those who would be ungodly. If God destroyed these two cities reducing them to ashes, He WILL judge false prophets and false teachers.

So in these three verses we have (1) angels that sinned, showing that NO ONE is too high to be judged for their actions; (2) an earth that sinned, showing that God will not spare just because EVERYONE is doing it; (3) cities that sinned, showing that God will focus on specific sin in a specific area regardless of how prosperous that area is. God doesn’t like sin! **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE: God WILL judge sin!** {David Guzik} “Therefore, what makes the ungodly think they can escape God’s judgment? Their coming judgment is certain.”

BUT THE RIGHTEOUS WILL BE DELIVERED

7 And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: Amplified Bible And He rescued righteous Lot, greatly worn out and distressed by the wanton ways of the ungodly and lawless. Friend, does today’s world with its lawlessness and evil ways distress and wear you out or are you enjoying the fruits of wickedness? God rescued RIGHTEOUS Lot and *part* of his family and would have rescued all of them but those that remained were enjoying the fruits of wickedness.

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8 (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;) Adam Clarke calculated that Lot lived in this area for twenty years. In the Hebrew, the word “vexed” is better rendered as “tormented”. Twenty years of torment because of the sin of the people. **SAINTS’**

QUESTION: Are we tormented by the sin we see continually in this country and does our torment make us act in love or in criticism and bitterness?

9 The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished. Message Bible So God knows how to rescue the godly from evil trials. And he knows how to hold the feet of the wicked to the fire until Judgment Day. This is something else that we must get in the midst of these times: **OUR GOD WILL KEEP US!** So here’s a brief break to remind us that the Bible also says this and we should take these verses (among many others) as our daily confessions:

- **Philippians 4:7 KJV** *And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*
- **2 Thessalonians 3:3 KJV** *But the Lord is faithful, who shall establish you, and keep you from evil.*
- **2 Timothy 1:12 NKJV** *For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.*
- **Jude 24-25 KJV** *Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, 25 To the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.*

THE WICKEDNESS OF FALSE TEACHERS

Preamble: Verses 10-19 give us the many characteristics of the false prophets and false teachers. I’ll point them out and list them because the time we are in is FILLED with these.

10 But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. Message Bible God is especially incensed against these “teachers” who live by lust, addicted to a filthy existence. They despise interference from true authority, preferring to indulge in self-rule. Insolent egotists, they don’t hesitate to speak evil against the most splendid of creatures.

- They are addicted to a filthy lifestyle in the lust of the flesh.
- They are proud, presumptuous, and hate authority. They insist on self-rule.
- They are consumed with themselves so they have no qualm in belittling others.

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11 *Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord.* Compare Jude 1:9.

- {David Guzik} *“They will even speak ill of spiritual powers (Satan and his demons) that the angels themselves do not speak evil of, but the angels rebuke them in the name of the Lord instead. Much of what goes on under the name of spiritual warfare shows this kind of pride and presumption. While we recognize our authority in Jesus, we see that it is only in Jesus that we have it – and we leave the reviling accusations to Him alone.”*

12 *But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption;* Compare Jude 1:10.

- They operate in the flesh as unreasoning animals who are taken, destroyed, and eaten.
- They speak evil of things that they don’t understand.

13 *And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you; **NLT** Their destruction is their reward for the harm they have done. They love to indulge in evil pleasures in broad daylight. They are a disgrace and a stain among you. They delight in deception even as they eat with you in your fellowship meals.*

- They have no shame. They do their “dirt” in the open for all to see.
- They are among us; in the Church; among the Body of Christ! (See Jude 1:12).
- They delight in deceiving us as they share the communion supper with us.

14 *Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children: **NLT** They commit adultery with their eyes, and their desire for sin is never satisfied. They lure unstable people into sin, and they are well trained in greed. They live under God’s curse.*

- They leer lustfully at men and women desiring them unlawfully.
- They can’t stop sinning and don’t want to. Instead, they want more sin.
- They deceive the weak to join them in their sin.
- They know, as stated earlier, how to get what they want out of you for their own good.

15 *Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; **Amplified Bible***

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Forsaking the straight road they have gone astray; they have followed the way of Balaam [the son] of Beor, who loved the reward of wickedness.

- They once knew the Lord as their Savior but have forsaken (deserted) that way. In spite of that, they yet remain among us!
- They follow in the path of Balaam who loved money so much that he disobeyed the clear command of God and paid for it with his life. (Numbers 22-24; 31:8, 16)

16 But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet. See Numbers 22:28-31 for this account of the donkey speaking.

17 These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever. Message Bible There's nothing to these people—they're dried-up fountains, storm-scattered clouds, headed for a black hole in hell.

- They have no substance in what they bring. Can't you see that?

18 For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. Message Bible They are loudmouths, full of hot air, but still they're dangerous. Men and women who have recently escaped from a deviant life are most susceptible to their brand of seduction.

- They deceive but they're not quiet about what they believe. We should easily spot them.
- They go after those that are new Christians to bring them back to their past life while thinking that God is pleased with the sinful life they are now living as Christians.

19 While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. NLT They promise freedom, but they themselves are slaves of sin and corruption. For you are a slave to whatever controls you. These were the same actions that Absalom, the son of David, used in his rebellion against his father.

- They promise a newly discovered level of freedom in Christ that they don't even have. The result is that the deceived end up just as bound as they are.

THE TRAGEDY OF FALSE TEACHERS

20 For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. {David Guzik} "It is better for a person to have never known a thing about Jesus than to hear some truth, hold to it, and later reject it. Greater revelation has a greater accountability." I have heard some say the opposite of this

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but the frustration of deception often does not appear until it's too late. People leave churches upset about something a false teacher in the pew has shown them but when they find out it was a lie, they are too ashamed to come back. They are then back in the world thinking about what used to be as their life continually spirals out of control and their soul is pointed toward the eternal judgment of hell.

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

This verse is not just for the false teachers, but it is particularly troubling for those deceived by them in verses 18-19. These are the new, excited Christians who must be nurtured and developed and not destroyed by these that want to justify their actions by having more like themselves.

22 But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire. {Adam Clarke} *"This is called a true proverb: for it is a fact that a dog will eat up his own vomit; and the swine, howsoever carefully washed, will again wallow in the mire. As applied here it is very expressive: the poor sinner, having heard the Gospel of Christ, was led to loathe and reject his sin; and, on his application to God for mercy, was washed from his unrighteousness. But he is here represented as taking up again what he had before rejected, and defiling himself in that from which he had been cleansed."*

{Adam Clarke} *"Here is a sad proof of the possibility of falling from grace, and from very high degrees of it too. These had escaped from the contagion that was in the world; they had had true repentance; they had been washed from all their filthiness, and this must have been through the blood of the Lamb; yet, after all, they went back, got entangled with their old sins, swallowed down their formerly rejected lusts, and re-wallowed in the mire of corruption. How dangerous when the person has abandoned himself to his old sins! Yet it is not said that it is impossible for him to return to his Maker; though his case be deplorable, it is not utterly hopeless; the leper may yet be made clean, and the dead may be raised. Reader, is thy backsliding a grief and burden to thee? Then thou art not far from the kingdom of God; believe [again] on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved."*

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Chapter 3

{Matthew Henry} “The apostle drawing towards the conclusion of his second epistle, begins this last chapter with repeating the account of his design & scope in writing a second time to them (v. 1-2). II. He proceeds to mention one thing that induced him to write this second epistle, namely, the coming of scoffers, whom he describes (v. 3-7). III. He instructs & establishes them in the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ to judgment (v. 8-10). IV. He sets forth the use & improvement which Christians ought to make of Christ’s second coming, & that dissolution & renovation of things which will accompany that solemn coming of our Lord (v. 11-18).”

THE TIMING OF THE LORD’S RETURN AND MOCKERS

1 This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: NLT This is my second letter to you, dear friends, and in both of them I have tried to stimulate your wholesome thinking and refresh your memory.

The danger of “seniority” in the Christian life, as with many things, is that it may begin to get “old”. The excitement you had when you first left the life of darkness and began to walk in this “marvelous light” has waned. It’s at this point that it’s always good to have something to re-stimulate you and that is the point of this part of the Apostle’s letter. After we have studied the Bible for years, we need something to stimulate us to keep on studying until the Lord returns for us. In this chapter, we’ll receive some stirring words that will make us think twice about our standing in the Lord and refresh our memory about how carefully we walked when we first came to the Lord.

2 That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Savior: The words of the Bible in the Old Testament and New Testament are critical for our spiritual growth and maturity. Spurgeon warns against so-called “scholars” that “*tear the very soul out of the Book, and leave us nothing at all*”. Our very lives depend on the Word of God!

The last part of this verse states, “**and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Savior**”. Some translations have restated this verse as “*your apostles*” as if the modern day apostles are included in that number. Yes, there continue to be apostles in the ministry of Jesus Christ but this verse is related to those that the Lord Jesus handpicked to establish the initial foundation of the church (Acts 2:42).

3 Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, NLT Most importantly, I want to remind you that in the last days scoffers will come, mocking the truth and following their own desires. Don’t be distracted by the term “last days”. The last days of mankind began when Jesus Christ returned to heaven. The promise given to Adam had been fulfilled and there was little more for God to do. Since that time, the end has drawn closer and closer. It is during this time scoffers (mockers, those who ridicule and make fun) have come. It is important for us to remember this because it’s difficult to maintain your consistency in the Gospel when all that you hold dear is the subject of continual ridicule. Also remember that these scoffers are walking after

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their own lusts and desires. Their agenda has been propagated in their heads and they have some vested interest in denying the coming of the Lord Jesus.

4 And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. NLT They will say, “What happened to the promise that Jesus is coming again? From before the times of our ancestors, everything has remained the same since the world was first created.” {David Guzik} *“The scoffers base their message on the idea that things have always been the way they are right now, and that God has not and will not do anything new in His plan for creation.”* This is the message of those that proclaim, “God is dead!” They also offer the weak argument questioning how a “good God” could allow such bad things to happen. But these are all statements to shake our faith in the fact that the Lord WILL return and He WILL intervene in the affairs of mankind. It seems that every time a national figure declares, “Jesus Christ is coming again!” this becomes the opportunity for the scoffers to jump in with their words of ridicule and defiance. **DON'T LET THESE WORDS SWAY YOU!** Even the Lord says, “I am soon to come” (Rev. 22:20) and it's sooner, much sooner, now than when that verse was written.

5 For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Can you imagine someone who chooses to be ignorant? Maybe you know someone that refuses to learn something that can help them in life. This is the attitude of the scoffers. What they offer in ridicule of the return of Christ is more important to them than any facts and there are many facts presented that they CHOOSE to ignore. The main fact they CHOOSE to ignore is the power of God. God spoke the entire creation into existence. This is why the errors of evolution and the “big bang” theory of the creation of the universe are so great – they support the heresy of a godless creation and fuel the willful ignorance of the scoffers.

6 Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: {David Guzik} *“The scoffers presume upon the mercy and longsuffering of God, insisting that because they have never seen a widespread judgment of God, that there will never be one. But they willfully forget God’s creation and the judgment God poured out on the earth in the days of Noah.”* I remember being taught in “religion” class in high school that the account of Noah’s Ark was a fable. Initially, I was shocked and the scoffer teacher made me a scoffer. At that time I was religious and not in a relationship. After my religion became a relationship, I found that the key is what the BIBLE says and the fact that, though the flood was ancient history, the Lord Jesus Himself referred to it as a fact (Luke 17:27).

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

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by the same word, the present heavens and earth have been stored up for fire. They are being kept for the day of judgment, when ungodly people will be destroyed. The same Word of God that spoke the creation into existence continues to speak holding the heaven and earth in store until God's time of judgment by fire. Therefore, it's important for us that choose to know to not be too attached to this world. Don't become a hermit but don't become a miser either.

8 But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. Message Bible Don't overlook the obvious here, friends. With God, one day is as good as a thousand years, a thousand years as a day. This is a verse that is often quoted and very rarely understood. Some have used this verse to come up with the concept of a "prophetic day". That's not what it's saying and I'll support that with our commentator first: {Adam Clarke} "*All time is as nothing before him, because in the presence as in the nature of God all is eternity; therefore nothing is long, nothing short, before him; no lapse of ages impairs his purposes, nor need he wait to find convenience to execute those purposes. And when the longest period of time has passed by, it is but as a moment or indivisible point in comparison of eternity.*"

To understand this, God gave me an insight on how He operates and it may help us understand this verse better. God does not operate in time. No, He exists and operates outside of time. Time is irrelevant to God. Adam and Eve, prior to the Fall, are the closest examples we have of this same idea but still not to the level of God. Adam and Eve knew night and day so they understood changes in time but not the end of an individual's time. However, with the death of Abel they had their first experience of the devastation of the life caused by sin. This was their first experience with the cessation of time. But, back to God, He chooses to operate within our time (per Galatians 4:4, at the fullness of time, Jesus came) but it still doesn't impact Him. Why is all of this important? We need understand the operation of God because the scoffers don't. They look at time passing as a pattern but time passing means nothing to God. If He said He will do something, whether He does it within a thousand years or a day, they're irrelevant, or both the same, to Him. But He also understands that our time is limited so He chooses to jump into our time.

9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Message Bible God isn't late with his promise as some measure lateness. He is restraining himself on account of you, holding back the End because he doesn't want anyone lost. He's giving everyone space and time to change. Now just because time is irrelevant to God doesn't mean that He doesn't understand that it is very relevant to us. His delay is not denial, tardiness, or slackness but it may instead be grace

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and mercy so that we have a chance to change. But more importantly, we receive a glimpse into the awesome longsuffering (patience and tolerance) of God. Slackness says that God doesn't care. That's not true because He's not slack. But longsuffering says He cares immensely and doesn't want us to perish. We often forget this when we want God to exercise vengeance on our behalf. We forget how longsuffering He was toward us when we deserved similar vengeance.

THE DAY OF THE LORD

10 *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.* Let's look at this term, "the Day of the Lord". The New Testament Church is focused on the Rapture of the Church revealed by the Apostle Paul in 1st Thessalonians. But the Rapture of the Church does not end sin but the Day of the Lord will. The Day of the Lord is often referred to in the Old and New Testaments. It is that "day", or period of time, when the final judgment takes place and the re-creation occurs. The best way to look at it is to begin looking at Revelation 20 to the end at chapter 22. Here we have the final judgment, all to be judged are thrown into the lake of fire, and the new heavens and new earth appear. The Apostle takes it one step further and explains that prior to the "new heavens and a new earth" of Revelation 21, there will be a thunderous noise and fire burning up the heavens and the earth. He talked about this process to get us ready for the next verse.

11 *Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, **NLT** Since everything around us is going to be destroyed like this, what holy and godly lives you should live.* So we must stop focusing on now! Our "stuff" won't be here always. Instead, we must prepare for eternity by focusing on the lives we live. Preachers and theologians get into arguments about what will occur at the Day of the Lord but the key is to be ready for it with our holy and godly lives. For this, there is no argument.

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

Message Bible *Daily expect the Day of God, eager for its arrival. The galaxies will burn up and the elements melt down that day—but we'll hardly notice.* If we're not eagerly anticipating the return of Christ, could it be that we're too deeply immersed in the things of this world? Perhaps we're concerned about loved ones that refuse to come to Christ. God's longsuffering is there for them. But the Apostle seems to say that we can hasten that day. (To hasten that day, we must first hasten the Rapture of the Church.) Pastor David Guzik gives us some suggestions on what to do:

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- We can also hasten the Lord's coming through **evangelism**. Paul said that God's prophetic focus on Israel will resume when the fullness of the Gentiles has come in (Romans 11:25).
- We can also hasten the Lord's coming through **prayer**. Even as Daniel asked for a speedy fulfillment of prophecy regarding captive Israel (Daniel 9), we can also pray 'Even so, come, Lord Jesus!' (Revelation 22:20)

13 Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. NLT But we are looking forward to the new heavens and new earth he has promised, a world filled with God's righteousness. He made us a promise through the Word of God. Are we looking forward to it? Is our focus on a world filled with righteousness or are we focused on streets of gold (still consumed with stuff)? There is so much unrighteousness at subtle levels in the world and, unfortunately, in the church. How can we not be looking forward in expectation to that day?

LIVE RIGHT – THIS IS IMPORTANT!

14 Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless. NLT And so, dear friends, while you are waiting for these things to happen, make every effort to be found living peaceful lives that are pure and blameless in his sight. The Apostle has gone full circle and he returns to the key word he used when he started this letter – diligence. Let me remind you of what I said in the first chapter regarding that word:

The word DILIGENCE means to be constant in effort to accomplish what is undertaken; attentive; industrious; done with painstaking care and perseverance. It is not just work but very careful, painstaking work; it is the work of a master craftsman. This means a lot of people are working at their salvation but are not diligent because they are not using the tools that God has given. They don't treat their souls as precious. **Diligence is the key.** This is not a once and for all situation but one that recycles continuously until we come to the measure of a perfect man or woman.

My personal inspection must be daily, hourly, and constantly going on. My goal is to be found in him in, without spot, and blameless. {David Guzik} *"If our hearts are really set on the glory of the new heaven and new earth, we will endeavor to walk godly in regard to our brothers and sisters (in peace) and in regard to God (without spot and blameless)."* How do we reach this point? The Word of God has an answer: **James 3:2 Amplified Bible For we all often stumble and fall and offend in many things. And if anyone does not offend in speech [never says the wrong things], he is a fully developed character and A PERFECT**

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MAN, able to control his whole body and to curb his entire nature. It seems so simple yet it's hard. But it's a starting point.

15 And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; Message Bible Interpret our Master's patient restraint for what it is: salvation. Our good brother Paul, who was given much wisdom in these matters, refers to this in all his letters, and has written you essentially the same thing. {C.H. Spurgeon} *"We are puzzled at the longsuffering which causes so weary a delay. One of the reasons is that we have not much longsuffering ourselves. We think that we do well to be angry with the rebellious, and so we prove ourselves to be more like Jonah than Jesus."* The Apostle mentions Paul because many of those he was writing to were his converts. {David Guzik} *"It is fashionable for some critics to say that the Apostle Peter and the Apostle Paul aren't in agreement. These same critics also often say that Peter and Paul aren't in agreement with Jesus. Yet here Peter affirmed Paul's teaching in the warmest terms. He called Paul beloved, and he said that Paul wrote with wisdom. This praise from Peter is even more wonderful when we remember that at one time Paul publicly rebuked Peter for public compromise (Galatians 2:11-21)."*

16 As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. Message Bible Some things Paul writes are difficult to understand. Irresponsible people who don't know what they are talking about twist them every which way. They do it to the rest of the Scriptures, too, destroying themselves as they do it. I like the transparency of Peter here. Paul was already a scholar when the Lord met him on the Damascus Road. Peter, on the other hand, had the testimony as he stood before the Council of being "ignorant and unlearned" (Acts 4:13). But those differences did not separate them. What do we allow to separate us?

But be careful with this verse. Some have used it to indicate that the deeper understanding of Scripture should be left to scholars lest you be found "twisting it". No, the Apostle is speaking of intentionally and maliciously distorting the Word of God. {Adam Clarke} *"I may just add that the verb [twist], which the apostle uses here, signifies to distort, to put to the rack, to torture, to overstretch and dislocate the limbs; and hence the persons here intended are those who proceed according to no fair plan of interpretation, but force unnatural and sophistical meanings on the word of God: a practice which the common simple Christian is in no danger of following."*

17 Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. BEWARE! You CAN fall and be led away with the error of the wicked. If that occurs, yes, you are now

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wicked and susceptible to the judgment of the wicked. Until we understand that we CAN fall, then we don't live a life of carefulness and diligence – the life the Apostle has been encouraging throughout this epistle. If I work on a roof with the mistaken idea that I can't fall, I probably will.

18 But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen. Not only should you be careful to not fall, but GROW. While you look down to not fall, look up to grow. This is another of the concepts with which the Apostle started this epistle. Don't fall but grow.

The Lord Jesus is coming back; let us all be ready!

