

## NOTES ON II PETER

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### **INTRODUCTION:**

#### ***Authenticity and Reliability***

The internal and external evidences support that II Peter is genuine and has a legitimate place in the canon of scripture. However, general observations concerning the genuineness of the epistle show less historical support for its genuineness than for any other book of the New Testament.

Some doubt its right to be in the canon and others outright deny it. However, some assign it to the apostolic age and to Peter. Still others assign it to the post-apostolic age and repudiate the fact that Peter wrote it. Most modern scholars accept it on the basis that second century writers knew it and quoted from it.

Actual external evidences in favor of its apostolic authority are meager. The first writer to mention it by name is Origen (c. 240 A.D.) who mentions the fact that it is contested. Eusebius (c. 325 A.D.), Bishop of Caesarea, regarded it with suspicion. However, Jerome (c. 350 A.D.) included it in his Vulgate version. In the fourth century, the councils of Laodicea (c. 372) and Carthage (c.397) accepted it in a formal recognition and placed it in the canon with equal authority as the rest of the books.

More importantly, internal evidences favor of its apostolic authority. There are those who discredit the book as a work of Peter because of the differences in the style of this and the first epistle. The nature in the two epistles explains this difference. The nature of the first epistle is to strengthen and build up the brethren. In the second epistle, the nature is to confront the false teachers and their error present in Peter's time.

The internal evidence strengthen the case for Peter's authorship. The following things are similar in both epistles and indicate the same writer, Peter.

- The word *precious* (I Pet. 1:7-19; II Pet. 1:1) occurs often in Revelation, but not in other books.

- *The word virtue* (I Pet. 2:9; II Pet. 1:3) finds itself only in Phil. 4:8.
- *The word supply* (I Pet. 4:11; II Pet. 1:5) is rare in other books.
- *Love of brethren* (I Pet. 1:22; II Pet. 1:7). occurs only in three other places.
- *Behold* (I Pet. 2:12; 3:2--verbal form), (II Pet. 1:16--eyewitness) is not elsewhere in the New Testament.
- *Ungodly* (I Pet. 4:18; I Pet. 2:5; 3:7) occurs but three other places except Jude, where it occurs three times.

The epistle itself claims as its author Peter who is an apostle of the Lord (1:1). Credibility grows with the claim that the writer was an eyewitness to the Lord's majesty at the Mount of Transfiguration, which locates the time of writing in the first century (1:16). The claim in the epistle to be the second of two epistles is a fact which fits the idea of Peter's authorship.

If Peter the apostle did not write it, certain questions need answers:

1. Why attack heresy when this would itself be heresy, if not written by Peter? (2:1)
2. Why condemn those who wrest the scriptures, when the letter would be a prevarication, if not written by Peter? (3:15)

### ***The Persons to Whom Peter Writes This Letter***

The letter claims to be written to the same people as the former epistle (3:1). This would include the "elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia." (I Pet. 1:1). Pontus is an area to the north in Asia Minor that borders on the Black Sea and that Luke mentions in Acts 2:9 and Acts 18:2. Galatia literally signifies the land of Gaul. Galatia was the Roman province that occupied the central portion of Asia Minor. Cappadocia is in Asia Minor to the east of Galatia. Asia refers to the province that occupies the western part of Asia Minor with Ephesus as its capital. Bithynia was to the west of Pontus in northern Asia Minor and bordered the Black Sea. These people all could have been the people spoken of as being scattered abroad in Acts 8:1-4 or at other times of persecution.

### ***The Time and Place of the Writing***

Since the epistle does not say as to when and where Peter wrote the epistle, anything said would be mere supposition; yet, the following is clear. It was near the close of the apostle's life (1:13). It was after the first epistle. Most scholars place the date around 64 or 65. There is no mention in the epistle as to the place of the writing. The claims of Roman Catholicism that the letter was written from Rome are unjustified and unreliable. The first letter was written from Babylon (I Pet. 5:13), and while the second letter may have been, there is no proof.

### ***The Design of the Epistle***

By design the epistle warns against false doctrine and false teachers. The way offered to meet false doctrine is through knowledge.

## **Outline of the Epistle**

- A. Address and salutation (1:1-3).
- B. Exhortation to "make your calling and election sure" (1:3-11) through the knowledge of him.
  - 1. All things that pertain to life and godliness are through him that called us (1:3-4).
  - 2. This knowledge requires us to add "these things" (1:5-9).
  - 3. Entrance into the eternal kingdom is the end result (1:10-11).
- C. The apostle's right to speak and remind them of these things (1:12-21).
  - 1. Peter's willingness to fulfill this responsibility (1:12-15).
  - 2. The source of their knowledge concerning the power and coming of Christ (1:16-21).
    - a. Not cunningly devised fables (1:16a).
    - b. They were eyewitnesses to his majesty (1:16b-17).
    - c. They had the sure word of prophecy (1:18-21).
- D. Warning against false teachers (2:1-22).
  - 1. The nature of the false teaching (2:1-11).
  - 2. The nature of the false teachers (2:12-19).
  - 3. The destiny of all those who turn away from the Savior (2:20-22).
- E. The second coming and the end of the world (3:1-13).
  - 1. False doctrine taught concerning the second coming (3:1-7).
  - 2. The nature of second coming and Christian's attitude toward it (3:8-13).
- F. Final exhortations and conclusion of the letter (3:14-18).

## **NOTES ON THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER**

### **Address and Salutation, 1:1-3**

Peter begins by immediately asserting his apostolic authority: "Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ." *Servant* is a bondservant, a slave, one owned by another. The one who is the bondservant completely gives himself over to the wishes of the master regardless of the cost to self. (cf. Mt. 10:34-39; Lk. 14:25-33). *Apostle* is the office of an apostle or one sent in this instance by Christ. (Acts 18; Acts 2:21-23; I Cor. 12:28; Jno. 14:25-26; Mk. 16:17-18). By designating the office that he held, the apostle was assured of being heard.

The writer appeals to his readers and identifies with them in the faith by saying to them that they had obtained a like precious faith with us in the righteousness of our God and the Savior Jesus Christ. *A like precious faith* refers to the gospel as a revealed system. It

carries the following implication: a system delivered (Jude 3) and obedience to that system (I Pet. 1:22-23). *Precious* refers to its value. It is just as precious to the ones to whom the letter is written as it is to Peter or anyone else. *In the righteousness of God and Christ* describes a faith found in the righteousness of God and Christ and nowhere else. The word "righteousness" is the character or quality of being right or just. The former spelling was *rightwiseness*. It refers to an attribute of God (Rom. 3:25-26). The meaning is that God was just in providing all men with salvation through the death of Christ.

*Grace to you and peace be multiplied in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord* (1:2). *Grace* is unmerited favor (Eph. 1:3; Jas. 1:27) and *peace* includes peace with God, peace with our fellow man, and peace with oneself. *Multiply* indicates Peter's wish for them was to increase in a magnitude greater than the ordinary wish. *Knowledge* denotes exact or full knowledge, discernment, and recognition. It involves participation by the knower in the object known. The other word for knowledge denotes only a seeking to know or an inquiry. This full knowledge involves an impression, and then beyond this, an expression. One may know about God or the facts involved in the gospel but never come to know God (Mt. 7:21).

### ***Exhortation to Make Your Calling and Election Sure.***

*All things that pertain to life and godliness are through the knowledge of him that called* (1:3-4). God has granted us all these things, but they are through knowledge of him that called. God who has the power to grant also has the power to condition. This knowledge is the full knowledge spoken of above. His virtue and glory called us. Christ suffered and died on the cross and then rose to glory made possible the gospel. (Phil. 2:5-11; II Thes. 2:13-14). The significance of this statement is the fact that all things of importance are through the word of God. Knowledge is the key; therefore, we must study and gain this full knowledge (II Tim. 3:16-17). Through this glory and virtue, we have precious and exceedingly great promise. All the promises of the Christian religion hinge upon the glory and virtue of God and Christ.

Because of this, we have forgiveness of sins and life everlasting. We literally partake of the divine nature. *Partakers of the divine nature* refers to that which is from God and is the opposite of that which is of the world (Rom. 6:17-18). *Partakers* are sharers of that which is from God. A Christian can only escape the world and the lust of the world by relying on the divine nature. *Corruption* signifies the being brought to a worse condition, and is continual in its progress until an individual is morally desolate.

To obtain this full knowledge we must add *these things* (cf. verse 8). *Yea for this cause* refers to the promises in contrast to the corruption of the world. To have these promises and escape that corruption, full knowledge of Christ is essential; for we find all of the things to be supplied fully in Christ and God.

Peter follows with the necessity of adding to our lives what we now call the Christian virtues (1:5-7). *Adding on your part* means bring in besides and only we can add these virtues. This part God and Christ do not do for us. *Diligence* signifies earnestness and zeal; the haste that accompanies them. The first requirement in gaining these things is a sincere desire and a willing mind. We cannot obtain them with an indifferent spirit.

*Supply* is the operative word—the action verb. The understood subject of this verb is you. We must supply each of the virtues.

- *Faith*—Faith is a firm persuasion, a conviction based on hearing (Heb. 1:1; Rom. 10:17). It is the beginning or the starting place (Heb. 1:6).
- *Virtue*—To the Greeks virtue denoted all the things that make humankind A MAN in the absolute sense. It is the ideal, the characteristics judged the greatest in humankind; therefore, courage, vigor, morality, goodness, etc. Moral excellence (cf. verse 3).
- *Knowledge*—It is not the full knowledge used above, but rather the inquiry--the seeking to know. In the case of Christian growth, it is the knowledge of God's will or knowledge of spiritual truth (Col. 2:2-3; Eph. 5:17; Heb. 5:12-14).
- *Self-control*—This is man's responsibility in relation to what he learns from God's will. Some things he must do; some he must not do. He must subject himself to God's will in all things. It denotes self-government the ability to control.
- *Patience*—Patience denotes steadfastness, endurance under the trials of life.
- *Godliness*—Godliness is humble reverence and deep piety toward God.
- *Brotherly kindness*—Brotherly kindness is demonstrable love of the brethren (I Jno. 5:1).
- *Love*—According to Vine's Expository Dictionary full and unqualified love as expressed *agape* and *agapao* are used in the NT:
  - a. (a) to describe the attitude of God toward His Son, John 17:26; the human race, generally, John 3:16; Rom 5:8, and to such as believe on the Lord Jesus Christ particularly John 14:21;
  - b. (b) to convey His will to His children concerning their attitude one toward another, John 13:34, and toward all men, 1 Thess 3:12; 1 Cor 16:14; 2 Peter 1:7;
  - c. (c) to express the essential nature of God, 1 John 4:8.  
(from Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright (c)1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers)
  - d. See I Cor. 13; Col. 3:14.)

These must abound in the Christian or he will be barren and unfruitful. Literally meaning *not work, barren* denotes inactivity and idleness. The Lord spoke of *unfruitful* branches in John 15:2: "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away;" Paul describes how Christians are to do good works to one another in Tit. 3:14. To lack these things is to be blind, unseeing, and forgetful. In short these things are necessary to attain the full knowledge of Christ.

However, by doing these things the entrance into the eternal kingdom will be richly supplied as the end result (1:1-11). We must give diligence to make calling and election sure. *Calling* implies an invitation, but as an invitation, it can slip from our grasp. Eph. 4:1-4. The *election* part with the *calling* comes from God. Our duty is to make it sure or secure them. Consequently, if we do these things, we shall never stumble. The "if" makes the statement a condition and this condition involves doing, obedience (Mt. 7:21).

In conclusion to this part, Peter teaches that God will supply the eternal kingdom unto us only if we supply these *things* and, therefore, merit the greatest of inheritances.

### ***The Right of the Apostles to Speak, Exhort, and Remind***

Peter states his willingness to fulfill his apostolic right to remind. Peter was always ready just as all preachers are to ready (II Tim. 4:1-2). Even though we—the members of the church—know the truth and are established in it, there is an ever-present need to be reminded by one another lest we fail to fulfill our duty (Heb. 10:25).

The right thing for the preacher is to continue to stir up remembrance as long as he lives (II Cor. 5:1-4). Regardless of the disposition of the hearers or the persecution that others may inflict, we should not shirk this responsibility. Peter feels his obligation to the extent that although he knows that his time comes swiftly, he will stir them to remembrance, and even after his death, they will remember.

The statement that the Lord signifies shows that the writer of the letter was an inspired man. What he teaches cannot be wrong, but must be right or truth. It is with this authority that Peter turns to source of the apostles' authority.

The source of their knowledge concerning the power and coming of the Lord did not *follow cunningly devised fables*. This is the negative aspect of the discussion; this is what the apostles did not do. In I Tim 1:4, Paul also teaches, "Nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies, which give rise to mere speculation rather than furthering the administration of God which is by faith." The word, *follow*, is a word used only in the New Testament by Peter and means to follow up or out to the end (2:2; 2:15). *Cunningly devised* is a phrase meaning to play the sophist; to devise cleverly. The sophists were a class of philosophers that became prominent in the 5th century B.C. Many times their reasoning only appeared to be correct, but was false. *Fables* were myths, stories, and legends that are without basis or fact. Fables may be contrasted to parables which were stories in which all the elements were true; i.e. the parables of Jesus.

Therefore, the apostles do not rely upon that which comes from another or fictitious stories. In all generations, some claim that Christ, the miracles, the resurrection, etc. are nothing more than mere fables.

"Of those who profess Christianity in a certain 'non-natural' sense, while disbelieving what is commonly understood by that word. . . . The mythics represent the whole of the Scriptural history as a series of parables, never designed to be believed as literally true, any more than AR'SOP'S FABLES, though intended (like them) to convey some moral lesson." Paley, William, *Evidences of Christianity*, p. 3.

The apostle denies this view when he states what he did follow; he followed what he knew firsthand as an eyewitness and what he knew by prophecy.

Peter's reference here to what he knows of the power and coming of the Lord and its source (the knowledge) shows his wisdom in attacking the false doctrine being propagated concerning the second coming. While he does not deal with the error until the last chapter, he begins the foundation here by asserting his right to speak and the unquestionable source of his knowledge. In the second chapter, he attacks the devilish nature of the false teachers before attacking the doctrine itself. Thus, he has led up perfectly to enable himself to deal a deathblow.

Peter begins by saying, "But we were eyewitnesses of his majesty." The reference here refers to the Mount of Transfiguration (Mt. 17; Mk. 9; Lk. 9). We refers to the others present, James and John. *Eyewitness* is a spectator and eyewitness of a happening or an event. In our own court trails, eyewitness testimony rises to the highest level of proof. John appeals to this same high level of proof:

What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life-- 2 and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us-- 3 what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you. I Jno. 1:1-3.

The eyewitness account of the transfigured Lord is the greatest of evidence available. Scholars accept this same level of proof as true for historical writings. In fact, less than eyewitness proof is often accepted. Peter's account has the authoritative back up of the accounts that are given by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John in their gospels, which all certify the truth of the statement. All of these men are of known good character and have nothing to gain in anything less than the truth.

And *we have the word of prophecy made more sure.* 2 Peter 1:19 AVS. There are two views on the meaning of this passage. The first view is in the King James translation, which says, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy." The indication in this translation is that the prophecies offer more sure evidence of the Christian system than does the eyewitness testimony of the apostles.

The merit to this view is that the individuals to whom Peter was writing had to take his word for the transfiguration and to them the prophecy would be better evidence. The argument against this issue is the fact that Peter included himself (we) in the statement; therefore, it would be doubtful that he would think the prophecy stronger evidence than his eyewitness to the transfiguration.

The second view is that expressed in the American Standard translation: "We have the word of prophecy *made* more sure." Here the meaning is that the transfiguration makes the prophecy more sure. The prophets of old had prophesied concerning the deity and son ship of Christ and the transfiguration made this more sure.

Regardless of which view we accept, the important fact is that both views establish what Peter says and the facts of Gospel.

The word *prophecy* means literally to speak forth. The scriptures use the word to mean one speaking forth the mind of God. Prophecy is not necessarily the foretelling of the future. Sometimes it is predictive. Examples of predictive prophecy are Micah 5:2 and Jno. 11:50-53. Sometimes, prophecy means the telling of that which cannot be known by private means, whether past, present, or future (Mt. 26:68). Prophecy is always the revelation of God's will (Deut. 18:18). In this passage the word of *prophecy* means the writings of the Old Testament prophets.

*Where unto you do well to take heed* points out the importance of the prophecy to us and all men regardless of the weight of other evidence such as the transfiguration. The prophecy is to receive the same metaphoric attention as a lamp in the dark. *As unto a lamp in a dark place* (Psa. 119:105) illustrates the illuminating quality of the scriptures of old. The lamp is the focal point of our attention *until the day dawns, and the day-star arises in your hearts* NIV. *Until the day dawns* compares to *dayspring* in Lk. 1:78 where the meaning

is the same: "Because of the tender mercy of our God, Whereby the dayspring from on high shall visit us." *And the day star arises* is parallel to Rev. 22:16: "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star."

The meaning of the passage is evidently that of the assurance in Christ that enters the heart through the scriptures rather than the second coming (II Cor. 4:1-6).

The nature and character of true prophecies of scripture are that they are not of *private interpretation*. True prophecies of scripture distinguish themselves from prophecies that are not scripture, as in chapter 2:1 immediately following in the text. The fact is that it is scripture and other prophecies are not. As scripture gives true prophecies are inspired of God (II Tim. 3:16-17). By using *is*, Peter shows that prophecies of scripture literally, spring into being, and thus, no prophecy of scripture springs into being by *private interpretation*. It must be inspired. Accordingly *private interpretation* is ones own explanation, solution, or construction. and not God's:

Explanation, solution, or construction. The writers of scripture did not put their own construction upon the 'God-breathed' words they wrote. W. E. Vine, *Expositors Dictionary of New Testament Words*, p. 268.

*For no prophecy ever came by the will of man* sums up the previous statement. This is the reason the above is true. Prophecy comes through man but by God's will where it originates. Peter clearly states the how of this prophetic revelation of scripture by saying *Men spake from God being moved by the Holy Spirit*. The moving is the inspiration of God as He moved the prophets to His desired end. God is the source; the Holy Spirit is the force or motivating power; the prophets are the instruments used to reveal God's word. Paul agreed that this is how that by revelation was made known to him the mystery of God's will. I Thess. 2:13; I Cor. 2:13; Eph. 3:3-5.

The Roman Catholic Church bases an idea and false doctrine on the above passage. They assert that an individual cannot interpret the scriptures privately or without the infallible aid of the church. They are incorrect in their position. They expect us to understand this passage to prove their point; therefore, they deny in the action the point made. If we cannot understand this passage, then how do we know that this is what it teaches? The real meaning is as expressed in this outline, that private interpretation refers to the one prophesying and not the one who is trying to comprehend the divine message. This view does not fit Paul's words in Eph. 3:3-5. Paul clearly says that when you read you can understand just as clearly as the apostle, himself, can.

## ***Warnings against False Teachers and False Doctrine***

Peter outlines the nature of the false teaching or doctrine in chapter 2. As there arose false prophets in olden times, there shall arise false teachers among the people to whom the letter is addressed. Note the comparison involves false prophets and false teachers. This distinction is evidently because the miraculous gift of prophecy was to cease in the not-too-distant future. I Cor. 13:8). With the advent of the inspired book—the faith once delivered in Jude 3—the inspired man would cease. Whether teacher or prophet, if they are false, there is great danger to the church. In Acts 20:29-30 and I Tim. 4:1-4, Paul describes these false prophets and teachers.

Peter describes these false teachers and prophets as *those who shall privily bring in destructive heresies*. They are secretive. *Privily* means secretly unnoticed; unknown (Acts 16:37). This has to do with the deception of false teachers and expresses the same idea as wolves in sheep's clothing. *Destructive* indicates the end of those who teach and who accept false doctrine. *Heresies* indicates the nature and character of the teaching:

". . . denotes a choosing or choice; then, that which is chosen, and therefore, an opinion, especially a self-willed opinion, which is substituted for submission to the power of truth, and leads to division and the formation of sects. Gal. 5:20 . . . ; such erroneous opinions are frequently the outcome of personal preference or the prospect of advantage. Vine, *Expositors Dictionary of New Testament Words*, Vol. II, p. 217.

*Denying even the master that bought them* can come by action as well as a voiced denial. In this case, the denial is the propagating of false doctrine, and the following of immoral ways under the cloak of religion. Any contradiction of Christ or his doctrine is a denial. Jude agrees with Peter in a firm statement on the nature and character of false teaching :

4 For there are certain men crept in privily, (even) they who were of old written of beforehand unto this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. Jude 4.

Of course, if we deny Christ, he will deny us. II Tim. 2:12. *The master that bought them* refers to the sacrifice made—"the precious blood of the lamb, without spot, even the blood of Christ." (I Pet. 1: 18-19). In spite of this great sacrifice, false teachers and prophets turn directly to their destructive ways.

*Many shall follow their lascivious doings* describes the very nature of the false religion in contrast to the true religion described in chapter 1. The direct contrast is between the adding of the Christians virtues and the adding of lascivious doings. *Lascivious* denotes excess, licentiousness, absence of restraint, indecency, wantonness. To many the ways of the world are attractive. A religion that allows them to practice such immorality has offers a great attraction. Those not Christian will see the false teachers and their followers and judge true believers by them. The world will tend to associate all believers with these immoral ones, and therefore, they would *speak evil of the truth*.

*In covetousness shall they make merchandise of you* shows that the aim of the false teachers is to make profit from their followers. *Covetousness* means a desire to have more, and it is always used in a bad sense; in this case, of material possessions. *Feigned words* are made up or fabricated. Compare this with the words of the apostles (I Thess. 2:5; I Cor. 2:1-4). *Merchandise* is to trade or to make trade of. Compare the giving of Christ and the apostles with the gaining of the false religions and teachers.

Destruction is sure for those who teach and follow false doctrine, as illustrated in the examples of the fallen angels (Jude 6), the destruction of the wicked in the time of Noah, and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. We may be sure that the Lord will deliver the godly out of temptation (I Cor. 10:13). He will keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of Judgment (2:4; Luke 16:19-31).

Peter lists those who are chiefly to be condemned in groups. (See also Jude 8). They are those that *walk after the flesh in the lust of defilement*. The use of the word *walk* signifies to live in these sins or a continuing in them (I Pet. 4:3; Jude 19). *Lust* is the seat of

sin in humankind. (I Jno. 2:16). *Defilement* has as its end pollution and contamination. The other characteristic groups follow:

- They despise dominion (All dominion includes that of God).
- They are daring (shameless and irreverent).
- They are Self-willed (One who\* dominated by self interest and inconsiderate of others, arrogantly asserts his own will) Tit. 1:7.
- They tremble not to rail at dignities (glories) (a thing, which the angels would not do (Jude 9) nor would, the angels bring judgment against them).

Peter describes the nature of the ones who are false teachers in the unequivocal terms possible:

- *Beasts without reason*--Jude 10; these are like animals in that they do not follow that which is logically right, but that which they desire.
- *Born mere animals to be taken and destroyed*--As animals of prey, their only end can be destruction, as they destroyed.
- *Railing in matters whereof they are ignorant*—blaspheme, revile, to speak evil of.
- *Men that count it a pleasure to revel in the day time*--to revel is luxuriousness, daintiness, and is different from the word translated *reveling* in Gal. 5:21; I Pet. 4:3, which is the consequence of drunkenness. The literal translation would be, counting reveling in the daytime a pleasure. Even the world reserves their excesses for the night and darkness.
- *Spots and blemishes*—moral spots and blemishes (Eph. 5:26-27).
- *Reveling in their deceivings while they feast with you*—reveling here is from a word used nowhere else and meaning sporting. Even as they ate with them, they sported at the deception.
- *Eyes full of adultery* (Mt. 5:28)--They could not cease from sin.
- *Enticing unsteadfast souls*--The unsteadfast were the ones they approached with false doctrine.
- *Having a heart exercised in covetousness* ( See 2:3).
- *Children of cursing*--John 17:12; Eph. 2:2.
- *Forsaking the right way*--the way of truth (2:2), they went astray as Balaam (Jude 11: Num. 22:1-41). This shows they fell from the right way or there is a possibility of apostasy.

Verse 17 illustrates the emptiness of these false teachers and their doctrine. The attack made by these false teachers used *great swelling words of vanity*, great promises; great words, but vain or empty and hollow. They entice people by the offering of fleshly indulgences without restraint. They attack those that have just come out of the world or new born babes in Christ (verse 14). They promise them liberty and make them slaves of corruption (Rom. 6:16-17).

A description of the destiny of all those who turn away from the Savior concludes chapter 2. For ones that escape the defilement of the world and then turn again, their

latter end is worse than the first. Knowledge here is full knowledge spoken of in 1:3; therefore, there is no excuse. It is better not to know the right way than to know and turn back. They compare to the dog turning to his vomit and the sow turning to the mire after a washing. Study this passage with Heb. 6:4-6 and Heb. 10:26.

The last passage of this chapter is undisputable proof that a child of God can so sin as to be eternally lost.

1. They escaped the defilement of the world; thus, they were cleansed.
2. They had full knowledge of the Lord.
3. They knew the way of righteousness.
4. Then they turned back, or they fell away from the way of righteousness.
5. The following parallel shows the truth of the passage: Man is polluted and sinful; man gets rid of sin; man takes on sin again. Dog has that in him that is corrupt; dog gets rid of corruption; dog takes it on again. Sow is filthy; sow gets cleansed; sow takes on filth again.
6. The latter end is worse than the first; therefore, man is lost in the first and last states; but for the last, there remains no more sacrifice for sin (Heb. 10:26), seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh and put him to an open shame Heb. 6:4-6.

### ***The Second Coming of the Lord and the End of the World***

The false doctrine taught by the false prophets and teachers concerned the second coming of the Lord. In this second epistle, Peter is stirring them to remembrance as in the first epistle. In 2:12-21, he has established his right to remind them. They are to remember the words spoken through the prophets, the apostles, and the commandment of the Lord, Himself. *The prophets* evidently refers to the New Testament prophets (Eph. 2:20; Eph. 3:5; Eph. 4:11; I Cor. 12:28). Contrast these to the false prophets of chapter 2. *Your apostles* would refer to the ones with whom they had had contact; therefore, Peter, Paul and perhaps others (3:15-16). The commandment of the Lord and Savior that is spoken of could be that concerning mockers in the last day (Mt. 24:11).

Peter's message on the second coming is clear. *Last days* refers to the Christian dispensation (Acts 2:17). *Mockers shall come with mockery*; that is, jesting and mocking the idea of the Lord's return. They are *walking after their own lusts*--not interested in the teaching from above--and *saying where is the promise of his coming?*

The false prophets and teachers argue that all things continue as they were since creation. Their reference to the fathers who have fallen asleep might refer to the first generation of the church. Men who had died since the establishment of the church (I Cor. 15:18).

Peter answers their false doctrine and teaching. He says that they willfully forgot the facts of importance in their arguments against the second coming. They forgot that God framed the worlds out of water and amidst water by his word (Gen. 1:1-6). By which means (the word), the world was overflowed by water and destroyed in the time of Noah. I Pet. 3:19-20). By this same word, the heavens and the earth are stored up for fire. The word *heaven* is used in the New Testament to designate three separate ideas:

- The air or atmosphere around the earth (Mt. 6:26; 8:20; Acts 10: 12; 11:6; Jas. 5:18).
- The universe (Mt. 24:29-31; Heb. 11:12; Rev. 20:11; 6:14).
- The eternal dwelling place of God (Mt. 5:16; 12:20; Rev. 3:12; 11:13; 20:9; I Pet. 1:12).

The heavens spoken of must be the first two, for the dwelling place of God, to where we are going if righteous, is eternal in the heavens (II Cor. 5:1).

This destruction will occur on the *day of judgment* (Rom. 2:2, 3, 16; Heb. 6:2). *The destruction of ungodly men* uses the word here for destruction indicates a loss of well being and not the loss of being. The idea is not extinction but ruin and loss. II Thess. 2:8-9 explains:

And to you that are afflicted rest with us, at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of his power in flaming fire, 8 rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus: 9 who shall suffer punishment, (even) eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might,

The Jehovah's Witnesses have as one of their false doctrines the idea that the death of man is complete destruction. To them the death is annihilation, or a ceasing to exist. Their view is false for the following reasons. The meaning of the word "destruction" rules out any chance of loss of being, but loss of well being.

DESTROY, DESTROYER, DESTRUCTION, DESTRUCTIVE *apollumi* NT:622, a strengthened form of *ollumi*, signifies "to destroy utterly"; in middle voice, "to perish." The idea is not extinction but ruin, loss, not of being, but of wellbeing. This is clear from its use, as, e. g., of the marring of wine skins, Luke 5:37; of lost sheep, i. e., lost to the shepherd, metaphorical of spiritual destitution, Luke 15:4,6, etc.; the lost son, 15:24; of the perishing of food, John 6:27; of gold, 1 Peter 1:7. So of persons, Matt 2:13, "destroy"; 8:25, "perish"; 22:7; 27:20; of the loss of well-being in the case of the unsaved hereafter, Matt 10:28; Luke 13:3,5; John 3:16 v. 15 in some mss.; 10:28; 17:12; 2:12; 15:18; 2:15, "are perishing"; 4:3; 2:10; 4:12; 3:9. from Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright (c)1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers.

The view is not consistent with the Bible's teaching on eternal punishment Rev. 20:10-15; Rev. 21:8; Mt. 25:46 where torment is forever and ever or literally into the ages of the ages.

The second coming and the end of the world will come. Regardless of how it may appear to us, God has not forgotten his promise to destroy the world. A thousand years is as one day with God, and God does not reckon time as we do. Time has no effect on God, for God is infinite. Thus, to say because it has not yet come to pass, it will not come to pass, is absurd. To say that a thousand years is one of God's days is a misunderstanding of the passage. The passage is not concerned with telling us how long God's days are, but rather to show that time does not affect God.

Humankind needs to understand that the Lord is not slack concerning his promise. *Slack* means to tarry or to be slow. Therefore the meaning of the passage is that

regardless of how long it may be in time, the Lord will still fulfill his promise. *The Lord is longsuffering*:

Longsuffering is that quality of self-restraint in the face of provocation which does not hastily retaliate or promptly punish; it is the opposite of anger and is associated with mercy; is used of God Hogg and Vine, *Notes on Thessalonians*, pp. 18:3-184.

*Wishing* is a deliberate exercise of the will. Therefore, God is deliberate in His desire for us to repent and in His waiting for that to happen. Repentance—an amendment, a change of mind, and a turning away and turning to—is here repentance from evil. From this we must understand that the end of the world is sure to come and we ought to be thankful that we have been given a chance to repent. We should take advantage of the opportunity before the Lord comes with his angels in flaming fire.

Peter is very specific as to what one might expect at the second coming of the Lord. *As a thief, the day of the Lord* will come unexpectedly and without warning. (Mt. 24:43-44; I Thess. 5:2; Rev. 3:3). *The day of the Lord* denotes the judgment and the coming of Christ (I Thess. 5:2; I Cor. 1:8; Phil. 1:6; II Thess. 2:2). Certain things will assuredly take place at the coming of the Lord. The heaven shall *pass away with a great noise*. The *heavens* include the immediate atmosphere where the birds fly and the universe with the stars, planets, and earth (See notes on verse 7). The heavens will perish and the noise shall accompany the passing away. *The elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat*. Used in the plural, *elements* signifies any first things from which others in a series, or a composite whole, take their rise—the substance of the material world in II Pet. 3:10. *Dissolved*—meaning to loose—shows that the elements will separate or come loose from one another. Therefore, the end will be complete demolition of the elements constituting the universe. All of this will result from *fervent heat*. *And the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up*. It is important to note that the earth will be destroyed and all the works in it whether by man or God.

The Jehovah's Witnesses teach among other false doctrines that the earth shall abide forever; that the meek shall live upon this earth. They say that the New Earth (3:13) (Rev. 21:1) is actually this earth, new in the sense that it will be cleansed of wickedness. Their view is essentially that the literal earth is as permanent as God's throne; therefore, never destroyed (Isa. 66:1; Psa. 78:69; Eccl. 1:4). And the earth to be destroyed is Satan's visible organization of Human Society (II Pet. 3:10; Isa. 3:19; Rev. 20:11).

The fallacies of this position are that the second point is without foundation and is total assumption. Even the elements of the earth in this passage shall be dissolved and utterly burned up. The earth abiding forever can be understood in the literal translation of the Greek *into the ages*, a designation of a long period of time. Compare this to the translation of forever and forever, *into the ages of the ages*.

What will be the end of the Lord's faithful—those who come to repentance? Peter answers this question directly:

What manner of persons ought ye to be in (all) holy living and godliness, 12 looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God, by reason of which the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? 13 But, according to his promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. 2 Peter 3:11-13.

The Christian's attitude toward the second coming of the Lord and the end of the world should center on *all holy living and godliness*. We should be *looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God*. And we should be looking for the New Heavens and a New Earth (Rev. 21:1; Isa. 65:17; 66:22).

## **CONCLUSION TO THE LETTER AND FINAL EXHORTATIONS**

Peter concludes with an exhortation to remain steadfast. We are to *give diligence* (see 1:5), to be *found in peace* (see 1:2), and *without spot and blameless in his sight*. The end of our faithfulness is salvation. Paul had discussed the same things in his epistle to them. Peter affirms that Paul spoke *according to the wisdom given him*. Paul describes this wisdom in I Cor. 2:1-13). He spoke of these things (I Cor. 15; I Thess. 4-5; II Thess. 2). some of things taught are by nature hard to grasp. (Note that they are not impossible--Eph. 3:3-5; II Tim. 3:15; Jno. 7:17). Here Peter says that what Paul wrote was scripture; therefore, as scripture his writings are inspired (II Tim. 3:16-17).

Finally, Peter concludes that since we know these things, we must be prepared and not let the wicked carry us away to fall from our steadfastness. In contrast to this, we are to grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

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