

2 Peter 3:1-18

Remember, Christ is Coming

Our Response to the Truth of the

Return of Christ

Pt.5

- 10** But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.
- 11** Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner *of persons* ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,
- 12** looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?
- 13** Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

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

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

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

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

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

The New King James Version. (1982). (2 Pe 3:1–13). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Introduction

Both the Old and New Testaments are filled with promises of the Second Coming of Christ.

There are 1,845 references to it in the Old Testament, and a total of seventeen Old Testament books give it prominence.

Of the 260 chapters in the entire New Testament, there are 318 references to the Second Coming, or one out of 30 verses.

Twenty-three of the 27 New Testament books refer to this great event.

The four missing books include three which are single-chapter letters written to individual persons on a particular subject, and the fourth is Galatians which does imply Christ's coming again.

For every prophecy on the First Coming of Christ, there are 8 on Christ's Second Coming. - Paul Lee Tan

G Campbell Morgan - "To me the second coming is the perpetual light on the path which makes the present bearable. I never lay my head on the pillow without thinking that perhaps before the morning breaks, the final morning may have dawned. I never begin my work without thinking that He may interrupt my work and begin His own. This is now His word to all believing souls, 'Till I come.' We are not looking for death, we are looking for Him."

A W Tozer - Preparation for the Second Coming

"I have read that John Wesley was asked at one time how he would react if he knew that Christ was coming that very night. His instant reply was 'I don't think I would change any of my plans.' " - Whatever Happened to Worship?, 7. (Tozer Topical Reader)

Spurgeon - "Apart from the second advent of our Lord, the world is more likely to sink into a pandemonium than to rise into a millennium."

The saintly Presbyterian pastor **Robert Murray McCheyne** was known to on occasion ask people "Do you believe that Jesus is coming today?" If they replied in the negative, he would say, "Then you had better be ready, for He is coming at an hour when you think not!" **Martin Luther** once said - I hope that the day is near at hand when the advent of the great God will appear, for all things everywhere are boiling, burning, moving, falling, sinking, groaning.

John Piper - The center of Christianity is the coming of the Son of God into the world as a real man to destroy the works of the devil and create a new people for His own glory. The very heart of our faith is that He did this by obeying the law of God, dying for the sins of His people, rising victorious over death, ascending to God's right hand with all His enemies under his feet. The second coming of Christ is the completion of His saving work. If you take it away, the whole fabric of His saving work unravels.

Review

- 1. Believers Remember it**
- 2. Unbelievers Reject it**
- 3. God Guarantees it**
- 4. Peter Describes it**
- 5. Behavior is changed by it.**

I. Believers Remember it

1. Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder),
- 2 that you 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,

II. Unbelievers reject it

- 3 knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts,
- 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 creation.”

- 5 For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water,
- 6 by which the world *that* then existed perished, being flooded with water.

III. God Guarantees it

- 7 But the heavens and the earth *which* are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.
- 8 But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day *is* as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.
- 9 The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

IV. Peter Describes it

- 10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.

V. Behavior is changed by it

11 Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner *of persons* ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,

12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?

13 Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

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

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

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

17 You therefore, beloved, since you know *this* beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own

steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked;
18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

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

7 RESPONSES TO THE THE REALITY OF THE COMING OF JESUS CHRIST

- I. The Anticipation
- II. The Expectation
- III. The Pacification
- IV. The Sanctification
- V. The Evangelization
- VI. The Discrimination
- VII. The Continuation

LESSON

I. The Anticipation

11 Therefore, since all these things will be **dissolved**, what manner of persons **ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,**

dissolved

Tense: Present
Mood: Participle
Voice: Middle or Passive

λυό: to loose, to release, to dissolve

Original Word: λύω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: luó

Phonetic Spelling: (loo'-o)

Short Definition: I loose, untie, release, destroy

Definition: (a) I loose, untie, release, (b) met: I break, destroy, set at naught, contravene; I break up a meeting, annul.

what manner of persons

potapos: from what country?

Original Word: ΠΟΤΑΠΟΣ, ἡ, ὄν

Part of Speech: Adjective

Transliteration: potapos

Phonetic Spelling: (pot-ap-os')

Short Definition: of what kind

Definition: of what kind, of what manner.

1 John 3:1 (NKJV)

3 Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.

Mark 13:1 (NKJV)

13 Then as He went out of the temple, one of His disciples said to Him, "Teacher, see what manner of stones and what buildings *are here!*"

The phrase **what sort of people** translates the unique Greek term *potapous*, which could also be rendered “how astonishingly excellent you ought to be.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2005). *2 Peter and Jude* (p. 128). Chicago: Moody Publishers.

ought

Tense: Present

Mood: Indicative

Voice: Active

Original Word: δεῖ

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: dei

Phonetic Spelling: (die)

Short Definition: it is necessary, inevitable

Definition: it is necessary, inevitable; less frequently: it is a duty, what is proper.

1163 *deí* – properly, what *must* happen, i.e. what is *absolutely necessary* ("it behooves that . . . ").

to be

Tense: Present

Mood: Infinitive

Voice: Active

huparchó: **to begin, to be ready or at hand, to be**

Original Word: ὑπάρχω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: huparchó

Phonetic Spelling: (hoop-ar'-kho)

Short Definition: I am, exist, am in possession

Definition: I begin, am, exist, am in possession.

5225 *hypárxō* (from **5223** /*hýparksis*, "under" and **757**/*arxō*, "begin, go first") – properly, *already* have (be in possession

of); what *exists*, especially what *pre-exists*, i.e. is already *under* one's discretion (note the prefix *hypo*).

Holy conduct and godliness are plural

Holinesses and godlinesses spread everywhere

holy

ἁγίας

conduct

anastrophé: behavior, conduct

Original Word: ἀναστροφή, ἡς, ἡ

Part of Speech: Noun, Feminine

Transliteration: anastrophé

Phonetic Spelling: (an-as-trof-ay')

Short Definition: behavior, manner of life

Definition: dealing with other men, conduct, life, behavior, manner of life.

391 anastrophé (from **303 /aná**, "down to *up*" and **4762 /stréphō**, "turn") – properly, *up*-turning; (figuratively) change of outward *behavior* from an "up-turn" of inner beliefs (presuppositions, etc.).

1 Peter 1:13–16 (NKJV)

¹³ Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest *your* hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; ¹⁴ as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, *as*

in your ignorance; ¹⁵ but as He who called you *is* holy, you also be holy in all *your* conduct, ¹⁶ because it is written, “*Be holy, for I am holy.*”

godliness.

2150 *eusébeia* (from **2095** /eú "well" and **4576** /sébomai, "venerate, pay homage") – properly, someone's inner response to the things of God which shows itself in godly *piety* (*reverence*). **2150** /*eusébeia* ("godly heart-response") naturally expresses itself in reverence for God, i.e. what He calls sacred (worthy of veneration).

As Peter drew the practical implications of eschatological truth, he exhorted his readers to also live worthy lives, characterized by both **holy conduct** (external actions and behavior) and **godliness** (internal heart attitudes and reverence

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2005). *2 Peter and Jude* (p. 129). Chicago: Moody Publishers.

2 Corinthians 5:9–10 (NKJV)

⁹ Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. ¹⁰ For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one

may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

As aliens and pilgrims, believers are not part of the world's system (Phil. 3:20; Heb. 11:10–11, 16; 1 Peter 1:1; 1 John 2:15–17). Therefore they are to live in view of the eternal blessings they will receive when Jesus Christ is finally revealed in all His glory (cf. Matt. 5:48; Col. 3:2; 1 Peter 1:13–15)

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2005). *2 Peter and Jude* (p. 128). Chicago: Moody Publishers.

I. The Anticipation

II. The Expectation

12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?

13 Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

looking for

prosdokaó: to await, expect

Original Word: προσδοκάω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: prosdokaó

Phonetic Spelling: (pros-dok-ah'-o)

Short Definition: I expect, await

Definition: I expect, wait for, await, think, anticipate.

from [pros](#) and [dokeuó](#) (to watch)

to await, expect

Looking for expresses an attitude of expectancy, an outlook on life that watchfully waits for the Lord's arrival.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2005). *2 Peter and Jude* (p. 129). Chicago: Moody Publishers.

hastening

speudó: to hasten, urge on

Original Word: ΣΠΕΥΪΩ

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: speudó

Phonetic Spelling: (spyoo'-do)

Short Definition: I hasten, desire earnestly

Definition: I hasten, urge on, desire earnestly.

hasten, hurry

Probably strengthened from [pous](#); to "speed" ("study"), i.e. Urge on (diligently or earnestly); by implication, to await eagerly -- (make, with) haste unto.

Peter's use of **hastening** only strengthens that concept. Rather than fearing the world's impending demise, Christians long for it, knowing they have everything to hope for and nothing to fear from the Father who loves them (1 John 4:18). Thus, like Paul, they can readily say *maranatha*, "Lord, come!"

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2005). *2 Peter and Jude* (p. 129). Chicago: Moody Publishers.

[Aramaic Bible in Plain English](#)

While you expect and eagerly desire the coming of The Day of God in which the Heavens, being tested by fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements, when set on fire, shall melt.

2 Timothy 4:8 (NKJV)

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

Philippians 3:20 (NKJV)

²⁰ For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

1 Corinthians 1:7 (NKJV)

⁷ so that you come short in no gift, eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ,

Romans 8:23–24 (NKJV)

²³ Not only *that*, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. ²⁴ For we were saved in this hope,

2 Corinthians 5:1–2 (NKJV)

5 For we know that if our earthly house, *this* tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. ² For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven,

1 Thessalonians 1:9–10 (NKJV)

⁹ For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, ¹⁰ and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, *even* Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

Hebrews 9:27–28 (NKJV)

²⁷ And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, ²⁸ so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.

Revelation 22:20 (NKJV)

²⁰ He who testifies to these things says, “**Surely I am coming quickly.**”

Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

- 12** looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?
- 13** Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

the day of God,

The coming translates the familiar term *parousia*, which literally means “the presence.” In the New Testament it does not primarily describe a place or event. Instead, the term emphasizes the personal, bodily arrival of Jesus Christ.

Some commentators equate the **day of God** with the “day of the Lord,” but they are not synonymous expressions. The **day of God** refers to the eternal state when God will have permanently subdued all of His enemies (cf. Ps. 110:1; Acts 2:33–35; 1 Cor. 15:28; Phil. 2:10–11; 3:21; Heb. 10:13). However, the “day of the Lord,” as discussed in the previous chapter of this volume, refers to the final, tumultuous events accompanying the

last judgment of unbelievers. While Christians are certainly eager for the day of God, their attitude toward the turmoil that precedes it is more sober. The apostle John’s vision experience, in which he ate the little book and found it sweet to taste but bitter to swallow (Rev. 10:9–10), dramatically illustrates those dual feelings. The little book represents the coming judgment—sweet to believers because of the **day of God**, but bitter because of the “day of the Lord.”

Because of which, referring to the day of God, indicates that certain other events must first take place in order for it to occur. In preparation for that day, Peter reiterated that God will destroy the present, sin-cursed universe: **the heavens will be** destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2005). *2 Peter and Jude* (pp. 129–130). Chicago: Moody Publishers.

because of which

To make way for the day of God we have to have the Day of the Lord

Following the final destruction of the universe, the day of God will arrive, and this corrupted world system will be forever abolished (Rom. 8:18–23; 1 John 2:16). **According to His promise**, that new day will showcase a **new heavens and a new earth**, meaning that God will create an entirely new universe (cf. Ps. 102:25–26; Isa. 65:17; 66:22).

The word rendered **new** (*kainos*) means “new in quality,” “different,” or “unlike anything previously known.” Thus the new heavens and earth will be far more than merely new in time or chronology; they will also be new in character—a realm **in which righteousness dwells**. **Dwells** (*katoikeō*) means “to settle down and be at home,” or “to take up permanent, comfortable residence.” In God’s new order, righteousness will enjoy a permanent, perfect existence. The apostle John further described the wonder of that new universe:

(Rev. 21:1–4, 22–27)

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.” ... I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. In the

daytime (for there will be no night there) its gates will never be closed; and they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it; and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life. (Rev. 21:1–4, 22–27)

On the basis of all that God has in store for them, believers ought to live in constant expectation—always looking for Christ's return and continually viewing everything in this life in light of their eternal destiny.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2005). *2 Peter and Jude* (p. 131). Chicago: Moody Publishers.

I. The Anticipation

II. The Expectation

III. The Pacification

14 Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace

Therefore

since all these things will be dissolved, what manner *of persons* ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,

12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be

dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?

- 13** Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

looking forward to these things

Tense: Present

Mood: Participle

Voice: Active

prosdokaó: to await, expect

Original Word: προσδοκάω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: prosdokaó

Phonetic Spelling: (pros-dok-ah'-o)

Short Definition: I expect, await

Definition: I expect, wait for, await, think, anticipate.

Word Origin

from **pros** and dokeuó (to watch)

these things

new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

diligent

σπουδάσατε

Tense: Aorist

Mood: Imperative

Voice: Active

spoudazó: to make haste, hence to give diligence

Original Word: ΣΠΟΥΔάζω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: spoudazó

Phonetic Spelling: (spoo-dad'-zo)

Short Definition: I hasten

Definition: I hasten, am eager, am zealous.

Cognate: **4704** *spoudázō* – properly, be swift (go fast, be *speedy*); (figuratively) to move speedily by showing *full diligence* (*fully* applying oneself); acting *fervently* (*speedy* commitment) to accomplish all that God assigns through faith ("His inbirthed *persuasion*"). Accordingly, **4704** (*spoudázō*) and faith (**4102** /*pístis*) are directly linked (see Eph 4:3-5; 2 Tim 4:7-9). See **4710** (*spoudē*).

found by Him

The phrase **to be found** is a sobering reminder that no one will be able to hide from Christ when He returns. He will overlook nothing, but “will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men’s hearts” (1 Cor. 4:5; cf. 2 Cor. 5:9–10).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2005). *2 Peter and Jude* (p. 132). Chicago: Moody Publishers.

Matthew 24:45–25:1 (NKJV)

Illustration of the Two Servants

Luke 12:41–48

⁴⁵ “Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food

in due season? ⁴⁶ Blessed *is* that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. ⁴⁷ Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. ⁴⁸ But if that evil servant says in his heart, ‘My master is delaying his coming,’ ⁴⁹ and begins to beat *his* fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, ⁵⁰ the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for *him* and at an hour that he is not aware of, ⁵¹ and will cut him in two and appoint *him* his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

14 Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace

in peace

Peace (*eirēnē*) could refer to a saving relationship with God and becoming at peace with Him (cf. Rom. 5:1; Eph. 2:14). But the apostle addressed his readers as **beloved**, indicating that they were already Christians (cf. Rom. 1:7; 12:19; 1 Cor. 4:14; 15:58; Eph. 5:1; Col. 3:12; 2 Thess. 2:13; James 2:5; 1 John 3:2; Jude 1). **Peace** could also apply to unsaved but professing people in the church. Perhaps Peter was exhorting them to be diligent to pursue true salvation’s peace, so that when Christ appears, He will find them genuinely saved. But that is probably just a

secondary understanding of the expression, as is the idea of being at peace with other believers.

In this context, **peace** primarily refers to the true peace of mind that accompanies a confident faith in the Lord. It is an echo of Paul’s admonition to the Philippians: “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:6–7; cf. John 16:33; Rom. 14:17; 15:13; Col. 3:15; 1 Peter 5:14). Peter is speaking about the kind of peace that banishes both earthly worries and cosmic fears—a peace that comes from knowing for certain that one’s sins are forgiven. No matter how terrible things become as human history moves toward final destruction, believers who live in hope have the settled peace sustained by what the Lord has planned for those who love Him (1 Cor. 2:9).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2005). *2 Peter and Jude* (p. 132). Chicago: Moody Publishers.

Quotes from J C Ryle on Second Coming

I can only say, that I am more and more convinced, as I grow older — that to keep our eyes steadily fixed on the second coming of Christ is one great secret of Christian peace. - Coming Events and Present Duties Being Plain Papers on Prophecy, 1879

- I. The Anticipation**
- II. The Expectation**

III. The Pacification

IV. The Sanctification

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

without spot and blameless; — —-both are plural

without spot

aspilos: spotless, unstained

Original Word: ἄσπιλος, ον

Part of Speech: Adjective

Transliteration: aspilos

Phonetic Spelling: (as'-pee-los)

Short Definition: unstained, undefiled

Definition: unstained, undefiled, spotless, pure.

784 *áspilos* (an adjective, derived from **1** /A "without" and **4696** /*spílos*, "spot, blemish") – properly, unspotted (unstained); (figuratively) *undefiled* and hence *fully acceptable*.

784 /*áspilos* ("unspotted," literally, "without spot or stain") refers to what is *morally (spiritually) untainted*, i.e. morally unblemished (pure) – "free from censure, irreproachable, free from vice, unsullied" (K. Wuest).

blameless;

amómétos: blameless

Original Word: ἀμώμητος, ον

Part of Speech: Adjective

Transliteration: amómētos

Phonetic Spelling: (am-o'-may-tos)

Short Definition: without blame or fault

Definition: without blame or fault, unblemished.

Cognate: **298** *amómētos* (an adjective, derived from **1** /A "not" and **3649** /*ololýzō*, "blame") – without blame – literally, without *mōmos* ("blemish"), used only in 2 Pet 3:14. **See 299** (*amōmos*).

In sharp contrast to the false teachers, who were “stains and blemishes” (2:13), Peter exhorted his readers to be **spotless and blameless**. Spotless can denote Christian character, the kind of people believers really are; and blameless denotes Christian reputation, the kind of righteous and virtuous people others perceive them to be—because they are.

Obviously, within the church there are those whose lives are neither **blameless** nor **spotless**. Such people, characterized by sinful lifestyles, may or may not be Christians (Matt. 13:20–22; Gal. 5:19–21; Eph. 5:5; 1 John 1:6, 8, 10; 2:9–11; 3:10–12; cf. John 8:34; Rom. 6:16).

There are some who are neither, and others who publicly appear **blameless**, but whose private lives are actually far from **spotless**. Like modern-day Pharisees, they work hard on looking good, but fail to truly cultivate a heart of righteousness (cf. Matt. 15:7–8; 23:25, 27). Although outwardly they maintain an honorable reputation, they do so only by hypocritically hiding their unrepented sin.

In contrast, Peter exhorted his readers to be both **spotless and blameless**. As genuine believers, he commanded them to manifest the highest levels of integrity and personal

holiness (Pss. 15:1–5; 24:3–4; 37:18; 119:1; Prov. 11:3, 5; Mic. 6:8; John 14:23; Acts 24:16; Eph. 1:4; Phil. 2:15; 4:8; 1 Tim. 3:9; 1 John 2:3–6; 3:1–3; Jude 24; cf. Gen. 6:9; Num. 14:24; Ezra 7:10; Job 1:1). When the watching world observes their godly behavior, the **blameless** reputation of such Christians serves as an essential testimony to the transforming hope in the gospel.

For believers, then, the promise of Christ’s return serves as a powerful incentive for holy living. After all, future accountability and heavenly reward are compelling motivations, encouraging believers to continually forsake sin and diligently practice the means of grace (such as prayer and praise—Phil. 4:6, Scripture intake—James 1:21–23; 1 Peter 2:2, worship—John 4:23–24, the Lord’s Table—1 Cor. 11:23–28, and fellowship—Heb. 10:25).

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I. The Anticipation

II. The Expectation

III. The Pacification

IV. The Sanctification

V. The Evangelization

15 and consider *that* the longsuffering of our Lord *is* salvation—

Without question, Peter wanted his audience to wait eagerly for Christ's return. At the same time, he did not want them to grow idle or detach themselves from society, being so consumed with thoughts of the future that they forgot about their compelling spiritual responsibilities in the present. God's judgment had not yet come; His wrath had not yet been poured out. There was still time to proclaim the good news to the lost. Thus, Peter reminded his readers to continue in the ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18–20), seeking to reach others with the life-giving truth of the gospel.

As noted in 3:8–9 (see the discussion of those verses in the previous chapter of this volume), the **Lord** delays His return in order to save the remainder of His elect. Thus, Christians should **regard** God's **patience** with joy, knowing that He is daily adding to His family until it is complete.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2005). *2 Peter and Jude* (pp. 133–134). Chicago: Moody Publishers.

2 Corinthians 5:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences.

I. The Anticipation

II. The Expectation

III. The Pacification

IV. The Sanctification

V. The Evangelization

VI. The Discrimination

— as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you,

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

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

With the phrase **just as also**, Peter referenced similar warnings that the apostle Paul had given about false teaching.

Peter graciously spoke of his fellow apostle as **our beloved brother Paul**, underscoring their common life and mission. As the two foremost leaders of the early church, Peter and Paul were certainly well-aware of each other's ministry. In fact, both had been present at the pivotal Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:6–21), and both had ministered with Silas (cf. Acts 15:40 with 1 Peter 5:12). More than twenty years earlier, Peter had even been confronted by Paul when he wrongly refused to eat with

Gentile Christians (Gal. 2:11–21; cf. vv. 8–9; 1 Cor. 1:12; 3:22). As a primary spokesman for the early church, Peter was undoubtedly embarrassed by Paul’s public admonition. Nevertheless, he graciously accepted the rebuke and responded with repentance. His respect for Paul was undiminished.

Here he appeals to Paul’s inspired letters for support—reminding his readers to reject the false teachers and remember what Paul **wrote to** them, **according to the wisdom given him**. Interestingly, Peter does not specify a particular Pauline letter or letters. Instead, he gives a general endorsement for Paul’s inspired writings, demonstrating the divine origin of the revelation given to Paul.

It is safe to assume that Peter sent this letter to the same regions of Asia Minor as his first epistle (cf. 1 Peter 1:1; 2 Peter 3:1). If so, his readers were most likely familiar with several of Paul’s letters—since Paul wrote many of his letters to that same area (e.g., Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians). So Peter’s reference to **all** of Paul’s **letters** suggests Peter’s audience was familiar with much of Paul’s correspondence. Because Paul was **speaking in** his letters **of these** same **things** (namely, eschatological events), it makes sense that Peter would cite Paul’s works here.

However, in Paul’s writings about the day of the Lord, the return of Christ, and the glories of eternity, Peter acknowledged there **are some things hard to understand**, such as the rapture of the church (1 Thess.

4:15–17), the coming man of sin (2 Thess. 2:1–4), the return of Christ in judgment (1 Thess. 5:1–11; 2 Thess. 1:3–10), and the glories of heaven (2 Cor. 5:1; 12:2–4). The word rendered **hard to understand** (*dusnoētos*) carries the additional connotation of “difficult to interpret.” In using this term, Peter was not implying that Paul’s teachings are impossible to understand. He is simply recognizing that some are more complex than others, especially prophetic revelation (cf. 1 Peter 1:1–12).

v.16 untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.

Those complexities opened the door for **the untaught and unstable**—namely, the false teachers—to **distort** what Paul taught about the future. **Untaught** denotes a lack of information, and **unstable** a vacillating spiritual character. **Distort** speaks of wrenching someone’s body on a torture rack. The term vividly pictures how the false teachers manipulated certain prophetic issues, twisting them to confuse and deceive the undiscerning. Such distortion often continues today regarding prophetic revelation.

Not surprisingly, the false teachers did not stop with prophecy, but also distorted **the rest of the Scriptures**, including the biblical teaching on God’s law, repentance, justification by faith, and sanctification. The fact that Peter placed Paul’s writings on a par with the **rest of the Scriptures** clearly affirms that Paul wrote divinely inspired

truth (cf. 1:20–21; 1 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 3:16–17). The New Testament writers were aware that they were writing the Word of God, as surely as the Old Testament prophets were. The word translated **Scriptures** is *graphas*, from the verb *graphō* (“to write”) that occurs about one hundred eighty times in the New Testament, of which half refer to the Bible, “the written word.” The noun *graphē* is used about fifty times, exclusively of Scripture and inclusive of the Old Testament (e.g., Mark 12:10) and the New Testament, as this reference makes clear (cf. 1 Cor. 15:3).

By distorting **the Scriptures**, the false teachers were simultaneously securing **their own destruction** (cf. 2:1, 3–12; 3:7; Jude 10, 13; Rev. 22:18–19), as well as the spiritual demise of their followers.

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

That’s why Peter warns his **beloved** readers **beforehand**, so that they might **be on** their guard

beware

Tense: Present

Mood: Imperative

Voice: Middle

phulassó: to guard, watch

Original Word: φυλάσσω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: phulassó

Phonetic Spelling: (foo-las'-so)

Short Definition: I keep, guard, observe

Definition: (a) I guard, protect; mid: I am on my guard, (b) act. and mid. of customs and regulations: I keep, observe.

5442 *phylássō* (akin to **5441** /*phýlaks*, "a military guard") – properly, preserve by "having an eye on" (J. Thayer), referring to the uninterrupted vigilance shepherds show in keeping their flocks (see Lk 2:8, used with **5438** /*phylaké*, "a military guard," i.e. exercising unbroken vigilance as a military guard).

5442 /*phylássō* ("keep watch over, keep secure") emphasizes the needed vigilance to keep what is entrusted. Thus **5442** (*phylássō*) is often used in the NT in the Greek *middle* voice meaning, "*Personally* be on guard against," stressing the constant, *personal interest* involved with the guarding.

beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked;

against **the error of such unprincipled men** (Phil. 3:2; 1 Tim. 4:1–7; 6:20–21; 2 Tim. 2:15–19; Titus 1:10–16; 3:10). **Unprincipled** (*athesmōn*) is literally "without law or custom," and came to mean "morally corrupt"—the essential character trait of spiritual deceivers.

beware lest you also **fall from** your own steadfastness,
Original Word: ἐκπίπτω
Part of Speech: Verb
Transliteration: ekpipto
Phonetic Spelling: (ek-pip'-to)

Short Definition: I fall out, fall off, fall away, fade away, wither away

Definition: I fall out, fall off, fall away; hence in nautical language: I fall off from the straight course; of flowers: I fade away, wither away; I fall from, lose, forfeit; I am cast ashore; I am fruitless.

be cast, fail, fall away.

From **ek** and **pipto**; to drop away; specially, be driven out of one's course; figuratively, to lose, become inefficient -- be cast, fail, fall (away, off), take none effect.

In keeping with Peter's warning, believers must **not** allow themselves to be **carried away** by the unscriptural lies of false teachers (cf. 1 Tim. 1:18–19). Rather, they must be alert and discerning lest they **fall from their own steadfastness**.

Steadfastness (*stērigmos*) indicates firmness, or firm footing; it is the very opposite of being unstable. Peter's concern was not that his readers would fall from salvation, but that they might slip from doctrinal stability and lose their confidence in the truth (cf. 1 Cor. 16:13; Eph. 4:14; 1 Thess. 5:21). For this reason, the apostle urged them to

be spiritually perceptive, or discerning, so that their eternal reward would not be diminished (2 John 8).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2005). *2 Peter and Jude* (pp. 134–136). Chicago: Moody Publishers.

- I. The Anticipation
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VII. The Continuation

18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

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

Instead of falling prey to the schemes of false teachers, Peter encouraged his readers to pursue Christlikeness and spiritual growth—a goal that every believer should have. The apostle Paul gave similar instruction to the Ephesians.

We are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but

speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love. (Eph. 4:14–16)

Grow (*auxanō*) means “to advance, or increase in the sphere of.” We are to grow in **grace** through the **knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ**. Because of His **grace**, God forgives the sins of His children (Rom. 3:25; Eph. 1:7; 2:5, 8; cf. Acts 15:11). They in turn feed on Scripture (Acts 17:11; 2 Tim. 2:15) and commune with Christ (John 15:1–11), thereby increasing in their **knowledge of Him** (Eph. 4:13; Col. 1:9–10; 3:10). In his earlier letter, Peter had commented on this very process, exhorting his readers: “Like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation” (1 Peter 2:2). As their knowledge and maturity increase, Christians are better prepared to fend off destructive doctrines and spiritual deceptions.

It is crucial to note that Peter designated Jesus as both **Lord and Savior**. Pursuing a deeper understanding of the fullness of Christ’s person, both in His saving work and His lordship (Rom. 5:1–5; Eph. 4:15–16; Phil. 2:12–14; 3:10, 12–14), will provide believers with the doctrinal stability they need to avoid being misled.

Peter closed the letter with a doxology, calling believers to worship and adore God (cf. Pss. 95:1–6; 105:1–5; 113:1–6; 148; 150; Rom. 11:36; 1 Cor. 10:31; 2 Cor. 1:20; Eph. 1:12;

3:20–21; 1 Tim. 1:17; Jude 25). They are to give **Him all the glory, both now**, in the present, and in eternity.

Clearly the pronoun **Him** refers back to Christ and is a sure affirmation of His deity and equality with God. After all, the Old Testament declares that divine **glory** belongs to God alone: “I am the Lord, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another, nor My praise to graven images” (Isa. 42:8; cf. 48:11; Deut. 5:24; 28:58; Neh. 9:5; Pss. 93:1–2; 104:31; 138:5; Ezek. 11:23). Yet various places in the Gospels attribute that same glory to Jesus Christ: “And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14; cf. Matt. 16:27; 25:31; John 17:24). The only possible conclusion, then, is that Christ is worthy of the Father’s glory *because* He Himself is God (cf. John 5:23; Rev. 1:5–6). Peter began this epistle with an affirmation of Christ’s deity in 1:1, and he now ends with the same.

Having reassured his readers of the certainty of Christ’s return (in 3:1–10), Peter concluded with an exhortation to live this life in light of that reality (in vv. 11–18). Accordingly, he echoed one of the New Testament’s foremost themes. In the words of the apostle Paul:

Col. 3:1–4

Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory. (Col. 3:1–4)

JC Ryle

Looking Forward to Christ's Return - Let me entreat all right-hearted readers to look onward and forward to the day of Christ's second coming. A time draws near when Satan shall be bound, and Christ's saints shall be changed—when sin shall no more vex us, and the sight of sinners shall no more sadden our minds—when believers shall at length attend on God without distraction, and love Him with a perfect heart. For that day let us wait, and watch, and pray. It cannot be very far off. The night is far spent. The day is at hand. Surely if our hearts are right, we ought often to cry, “Come quickly—come Lord Jesus! - Old Paths, “The Heart”, [Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1999], 357.