

The Return of the King Revelation 6-19

Five Lessons From Peter on: How to Build a Destruction-Proof Legacy

2 Peter 3:10-11

As we open to the second half, of the last chapter of 2 Peter, look with me at Peter.

Peter's Last Days

Here he is at the end of the road. I can just see him now with his gnarled fisherman's hands, and the skin of his face and arms still leathery from all his years on boats in the sun, those eyes still piercingly full of zeal.

Peter never lost the wonder of Jesus. He has lived everyday with purpose. Jesus had called out to him as a young businessman, and said to "Follow Me"; and Peter had.

Once the Spirit fell upon him, Peter was consumed with the message of the cross all his days. Now, as he nears the end, one last time Peter writes to keep his beloved fellow saints on track. As he does so, he warns that the coming fires are on the same level of catastrophe as the Flood.

Before we read verses 10-18 think about the context. As we saw last time, they lived in the center of all that was Rome. The Empire's greatness was clearly seen in the monumental temples (many with rows of 10 story high columns), sprawling bath complexes (some that could hold three thousand bathers at once), crowded athletic stadiums, acoustically perfect theaters, and the bustling marketplaces of Roman provincial Asia.

When it Feels Like the End is Near

As Peter began to write his epistles, those early believers in Asia Minor must have at times felt like maybe the end had come, the antichrist was here, and they were in the Tribulation. Peter in his first epistle comforted them about fiery trails, and now in 2 Peter 3, he would assure them that it was only going to get worse, until everything was finally consumed, and all things were made new.

Please join me 2 Peter 3:10-11 (NKJV), and hear five lessons from Peter on How to Build a Destruction-proof Legacy. How to live for things in life that won't ever get burned up and be forever lost. Please stand as we hear God speak through His Word.

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,

As we read this conclusion, remember again the struggles that those recipients of these two epistles were enduring. It was not into a vacuum that these words were written. Those early believers in Asia Minor must have at times felt like maybe the end had come, the antichrist was here, and they were in the Tribulation.

Note with me how Peter taught the early believers of the First Century how to face horrible times of pain and suffering in life.

First Century Believers Faced Horrible Tortures

I Peter 4:12 (NKJV) Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you;

This phrase in v. 12 could be read as “the painful trial that burns among you.” The original readers would hear this as martyrdom by being burned at the stake.

It could describe the fact that followers of Jesus in the city of Rome (the place where Peter may have lived as he wrote this letter) were being dragged from their families, dipped in tar, and used as living torches to light the gardens of Nero.

At the very least, Peter described experiences of pain comparable to the pain of being burned with fire, though his definition of these trials remains deliberately vague. Next, look at v. 13:

First Century Believers Experienced Divine Comfort

I Peter 4:13 (NKJV) but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.

Our suffering is the same kind of thing that Christ received, and therefore, in some sense,

suffering is an indication of the believers' identification with Christ. The word Peter used in v. 12 "partake" is taken from the familiar word *koinoneo*, "to share or fellowship with someone."

At the end of the verse when we see Peter refer to the "exceeding joy" we are reminded that Biblical joy, in the deepest sense, is a profound confidence that God is in control of every area of our lives, even the painful places. Now, look at v. 19:

First Century Believers Knew God Allows No Accidents

I Peter 4:19 (NKJV) Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.

In this one verse we can see that the content of the entire letter of 1 Peter is summarized.

We as believers do not suffer accidentally nor do we go through affliction because of some irresistible forces of fate. Rather, each time we suffer it is always and only according to God's will.

This is why we want to daily renew our surrender to God. The word Peter used, translated "commit" literally means "to entrust yourself for safe keeping."

If our God can oversee the countless galaxies of our Universe, and the constant ebb and flow of the tides of the seas, He certainly is able to personally walk me through any trials I'll ever face in my lifetime. Which leads us to Peter's second epistle.

Things didn't get better for those early believers after they got a letter from God, written down by Peter. Things got worse.

With all the hardships in mind that they faced, Peter writes a second time. They were suffering, they were losing their freedom, their security on earth, and for some, even losing their lives. So, Peter concluded his last words to them with 2 Peter 3, and a lesson on:

How to Build a Destruction-proof Legacy

We could summarize what Peter wrote by saying that he was exhorting his loved ones on how to rescue their treasures from the floods and fires. But as we look at 2 Peter 3:10-18, the lessons are far broader than just those early believers.

These lessons are for us, and maybe even more so, in the world where we find ourselves today! Lesson one from Peter is:

Beware of Materialism v. 10-11

*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,*

First of all, as we look back at the words of v. 10-11, let me ask you: What is materialism? Materialism at the deepest level is: Living for things. Notice Peter's reminder in v. 11: "all these things will be dissolved". Everything that can burn up is what we are NOT to live for.

We must not find our joy in things, our satisfaction in things, our hope in things. That is materialism.

God describes materialism in His Word as covetousness, greed, and possessiveness.

Greed is an attitude that gets demonstrated in both an action: POSSESSIVENESS (selfishness with what we have); and an attitude: COVETOUSNESS (**longing** for what we don't have).

Let me emphasize that covetousness or coveting is an internal "longing" for what we don't have. Look back at how Paul equated materialism with idolatry in Colossians 3:5 (NKJV):

Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

As believers, our flesh is still hard-wired to be covetous.

Longing for Things is Idolatry

Remember that God has said that coveting is like idolatry. Just as hate amounts to murder in I John 3:15; and lust amounts to adultery in Mat 5:28, so greed, coveting, and selfishness with things amounts to idol-worship.

Look onward to the very last word the Apostle John was told to give to the churches in his First Epistle. It is 1 John 5:21 (NKJV):

Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen

What are idols? Idols are “things” we elevate to the place only God is to have.

What exactly is John talking about? Earlier in 1 John he uses the same word Peter was instructed to use. What God is going to burn up is what we are not to long for. Look at 1 John 2:15-17:

Do not love the world or **the things in the world**. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. 17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

Just like Lot’s wife, when we long for what God has already said He is going to destroy, we displease Him.

So what is the first lesson Peter gives? Look back at 2 Peter 3:10-11. God said we keep our lives from suffering loss, from having the legacy of our life destroyed: Beware of Materialism.

- **By living for what lasts** v. 10 or what do we have that won't burn!
- **By living for what pleases Him** v. 11 so we won't be ashamed when He shows up unexpectedly!

What is Materialism or Coveting in 21st Century Terms?

Do you remember the 10th of the Ten Commandments? Almost all of us at one time or another, have learned these words. Why not repeat the 10th commandment with me now:

Exodus 20:17 (NKJV) *“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor’s.”*

In 21st Century terms, God is saying watch out for six dangerous desires that can ruin your life, destroy your eternal legacy, and pierce you through with many pains:

- *“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house”.*

Don't long for all the bigger, better, beautiful, spacious, comfortable houses you've seen and don't have.

Don't wish for it, or get a second job to earn more money for it, or spend all your time looking for it: ***because that is idolatry!***

Be content with the house you have; and use all your extra time to serve Me, says the Lord, instead of longing for a bigger and better house.

- *"You shall not covet your neighbor's wife".*

Men that means don't long for all the externally looking prettier, skinnier, younger women you've noticed in life. Women that means don't long for the stronger, handsomer, kinder, more caring, more athletic and in shape men that you have noticed along the way.

Don't wish you had one like the ones you see at work, or read about, and don't wish you had one like you see on TV, in movies, or online.

Don't wish she looked like a gymnast, or a cheerleader, or an actress/model; or he looked like an athlete, or a movie star or a model: ***because that is idolatry!***

Be content with the husband or wife God has given you; and use your extra time to serve your wife or your husband, and children instead of longing for a better marriage partner.

- *"You shall not covet your neighbor's male servant, nor his female servant".*

Don't long for a more comfortable life with less hard work, with less struggles and cares, and with more free time to do what you please, like all the rich and the famous you've watched, and heard about: ***because that is idolatry!***

Be content with the place in life where God has put you; and use your extra time to live more of each day for His glory, and surrendering for His will to be done in your life.

- *"You shall not covet your neighbor's ox" [his plow animal or job].*

Don't long for that dream job that everyone else has, with all the freedom, perks, security, and high pay like you've seen or heard about: ***because that is idolatry!***

Be content with what God has placed into your hands to do for Him, and trust Him to guide your path; and use your extra time to stay tuned into His Word, and following God's leading, and you will have the very best job in life that is possible to have.

- *"You shall not covet your neighbor's donkey" [his transportation].*

Don't wish you had a car (or truck, or boat, or bike, or motorhome, or snowmobile, etc.) like others have, that is bigger, newer, fancier, sportier, or more powerful or impressive: ***because that is idolatry!***

Be content with what you have, and thank God for all the struggles your car gives you because that is what God uses to increase our faith, our patience, and our dependence upon Him; and use your extra time and energy you save in not trying to impress everyone around you to start spending more time pleasing God.

- *"You shall not covet anything that is your neighbor's." God says we are not to long for anything we don't have that someone else has: ***because that is idolatry!****

Saying no to Coveting Anything

We must not find our joy in things, our satisfaction in things, our hope in things.

Greed is an attitude that gets demonstrated in both an action: POSSESSIVENESS (selfishness with what we have); and an attitude: COVETOUSNESS (longing for what we don't have).

So 2 Peter 3:11 (NKJV) gives us the first lesson from Peter on How to live for things in life that won't ever get burned up and be forever lost.

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