
a *Grace Notes* course

2 Peter

Lesson 10

2 Peter 3:10 to 18

by Dr. Grant C. Richison

2 Peter Lesson 10

Contents

2 Peter 3:10.....	4
2 Peter 3:11.....	6
2 Peter 3:12.....	7
2 Peter 3:13.....	8
2 Peter 3:14.....	9
2 Peter 3:15.....	11
2 Peter 3:16.....	13
2 Peter 3:17.....	14
2 Peter 3:18.....	16

2 Peter*Course Outline*

There are ten (10) lessons in the 2 Peter course. Each lesson has a Quiz, to be completed and returned to Grace Notes after studying the lesson. Here is a list showing the portion of 2 Peter to be studied in each lesson.

Lesson 1	Introduction; 2 Peter 1: 1 to 4
Lesson 2	2 Peter 1 :5 to 6
Lesson 3	2 Peter 1:7 to 9
Lesson 4	2 Peter 1:10 to 14
Lesson 5	2 Peter 1:15 to 21
Lesson 6	2 Peter 2 :1 to 5
Lesson 7	2 Peter 2:6 to 16
Lesson 8	2 Peter 2 :17 to 22
Lesson 9	2 Peter 3 :1-9
Lesson 10	2 Peter 3:10-18

2 Peter 3:10

"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"

This verse describes how God winds up the affairs of the universe as we know it. It is approaching a catastrophic culmination. God will make good on His word.

But the day of the Lord

We must distinguish between the "day of Christ" and the "day of the Lord." The "day of Christ" is the point where Jesus comes for the church and takes her back to heaven.

"...being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ..." (Philippians 1:6).

"...that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ..." (Philippians 1:10).

"...holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain" (Philippians 2:16).

The "day of Christ" is the rapture of the church into heaven and is part of the First Resurrection. This is a signless, timeless and any-moment event. It could happen today, tomorrow, next week or next year. The Bible gives no specifics as to when this event will occur. When Christ comes for the church, the dead will be raised first. Then those who are alive will be caught up with those raised from the dead to meet the Lord in the air. The Old Testament does not mention this day.

The "day of the Lord" refers to the period extending from the Second Advent to the end of the universe as we know it. The Old Testament calls this event the "Day of Jehovah." This is the event of our verse. This "day" is a series of events which covers a period of time including the tribulation period, the millennium and finally the decomposition of the heavens and earth as we know them. In "the day of the Lord," Jesus will come right to earth as opposed to just coming in the air like He will for the church.

"For the day of the LORD of hosts Shall come upon everything proud and lofty, Upon everything lifted up— And it shall be brought low—" (Isaiah 2:12).

"Wail, for the day of the LORD is at hand! It will come as destruction from the Almighty" (Isaiah 13:6).

"But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they say, 'Peace and safety!' then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief" (1 Thessalonians 5:1-4).

Another "day" of prophesy is "the day of God" (v.12). We live in the day when man does as he pleases. These are the days of the silent sky and the hushed heavens. God does not strike down murderers and rapists on the spot. He does not stop wars. We live in man's day. Man is at bat. Man continues to demonstrate what a mess he can make of the world.

Principle

God divides up time into segments ["days"] to execute His will.

Application

Do you think about and place confidence in God's plan for time?

will come as a thief in the night

The day of the Lord will come as a surprise. A thief does not announce his coming. He comes unexpectedly and suddenly. Christ's coming will be sudden and decisive. A thief's coming is unexpected. He does not write a letter announcing when he will come! He would not be in business very long doing that!

"But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. "Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect" (Luke 12:39-40).

"But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to

you. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they say, 'Peace and safety!' then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief" (1 Thessalonians 5:1-4).

"Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame" (Revelation 16:15).

The words "will come" mean to be present, be here and carry the idea of arriving.

Principle

We need to be perpetually prepared for the coming of Christ.

Application

Jesus' coming will be unexpected. He will come as a thief comes, at an unexpected time. If we constantly expect His coming, we will be prepared for it. If we expect His coming we will purify ourselves.

"Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure" (1 John 3:2-3).

in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise

"Pass away" carries the idea of come to an end, disappear. It is the heavens that will disappear. Revelation 20:11 pinpoints the time of this event.

"Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them" (Revelation 20:11).

The first century Greeks used the word "noise" for the whistling of an arrow. It carries the idea of "rushing sound" as of roaring flames, with a hissing or crackling sound, with a roar, with great suddenness. This would be like a detonation or explosion. The "day of the Lord" will be catastrophic. This takes place at the conclusion of the Millennium.

and the elements

Two possible interpretations are conceivable about the extent of this conflagration of the universe. This may simply be a limited renovation of the Earth or it might be the complete annihilation of the universe.

The word "elements" primarily signifies any first things from which others in a series, or a composite whole, arise. These are the elemental particles of which the universe is constructed. In modern language this might be the word "atom."

The word "element" denotes a first principle in the Greek. The building block of nature is the atom. This is the basic element from which everything material in the universe is made. The basic element in the universe is the atom. The "a" means not and "tom" means divided. An atom is something that is not divided. We can get down to something in the universe that cannot be divided. However, we know the atom can be divided. When that happens, we have a nuclear explosion.

will melt with fervent heat

The word "melt" means to melt down the elements of creation, i.e., to dissolve. Literally, "melt" carries the ideas to loosen, to loosen what is bound together. "Fervent heat" means to burn intensely. This is the destruction of the physical universe. To keep on burning intensely. The building blocks of nature (atoms) will be consumed by heat. They will "burn down."

Atomic fission, used on the atomic bomb, is energy liberated by changing the nucleus of an atom. As the heavy nucleus splits, there is a loss of mass. Atoms break up into their component parts, unbind. The energy of the atom is released, causing fire. If human beings can cause a nuclear fission, what kind of nuclear fission can God do in the universe? Jesus said that "Heaven and earth shall pass away (Matthew 24:35)." There will be no waste products left at all. Destruction will be complete and total, far greater than any nuclear reaction created by humans.

both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up

In the day of the Lord, the earth will melt. The Greek word for "burned up" means to disappear.

The elements of earth will no longer be found. The New Testament uses this term for burning with great heat.

This burning up could be either fusion or fission. This event will be greater than any thermonuclear reaction. The end of the world will finish in catastrophe.

Principle

Virtue comes from a perspective on God's catastrophic world-events planned for the future.

Application

This verse read the same way before we learned to split the atom. We accepted by faith the dissolution of the world by fire before science proved it possible. Now we can see scientifically how the elements can dissolve by fire.

The works of earth will go up in smoke. The Eiffel Tower, the Pyramids and all the great works of man will burn to ashes. This will end civilization.

God put up with a great deal before the Flood. There was immorality, sex perversion, violence and blasphemy yet God gave the world many years to repent. God is patient with our generation as well. However, the patience of God will run out one day. He will have exhausted His longsuffering. When this happens a day called "the day of the Lord" will come. This is the judgment on a world that turned its back on God.

The only reason this judgment has not come is that God still wants to save some souls. When the last soul is saved, then the end will come. First, Christ will catch His waiting bride away. Following this event, great devastation will fall upon the world. Unparalleled misery will come upon an intransigent world.

2 Peter 3:11

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

Perspective on God's plan for creation motivates us to live godly lives. Verses eleven to sixteen are an exhortation to live a life pleasing to God in the light of eternity.

Therefore

Peter now draws a practical conclusion to verse ten.

since all these things will be dissolved

Referring back to the heavens, the elements, the earth and all the works of the earth, Peter says that all these things will be dissolved. This is the termination of the universe as we know it. God has ultimately doomed this creation. He has written it off. The day of the Lord will come. At that time everything terrestrial and everything celestial will dissolve. How much of this world's population believe that this is going to happen? Precious few. Very few politicians or scientists believe it. Sadly, even some preachers don't believe it.

The words "dissolved" here and the word "melt" in verse ten are the same Greek word. The word literally means loosed. The universe will fly apart and dissolve. Judgment of this world will come. But the door of grace is still ajar. "Whoever will" may come. Flee to the outstretched arms of Jesus.

what manner of persons ought you to be

The phrase "what manner" is not a question but an exclamation. The word "manner" means what kind or sort of person am I supposed to be. "Think about the kind of person you should be since God is going to dissolve the universe."

The word "ought" carries the idea of necessity. There is often a big difference between what we are and what we should be. We need to realize our position in Christ. When we get to glory, our walk and our position will be identical. Meanwhile, our walk should be progressively closer to our position in Christ.

in holy conduct

This section sets forth a fourfold walk for the believer in view of the prophetic events described earlier.

First, we should live our lives "in holy conduct." This phrase qualifies the exclamation of the previous phrase. Two characteristics should characterize people who live their "manner" of life in light of the dissolution of the universe. First, they live their lives in "holy conduct." The word "holy" means they separate their lives unto God.

They live devoted to God, not to themselves. "Conduct" means manner of life. This word comes from two Greek words: good and to be devout. Manner of life is made up of actions. We should devote our manner of life to God.

When a young man becomes engaged, he sets aside all other girls. He devotes himself to his fiancée. If he marries her, he exclusively devotes himself to his wife excluding any familiar relationship with another woman. He leaves all his past girlfriends in the past. That is the charge we take when we get married. Similarly God wants us to exclusively devote ourselves to Him.

and godliness

Secondly, people who live in light of the dissolution of the universe live godly lives. "Godliness" is devotion towards God. These people devote themselves to God. This word occurs 15 times in the New Testament.

Our conduct is visible and horizontal but "godliness" vertical. This is what we are before God. We bear a family resemblance to God. Just as sons often resemble their fathers, our Heavenly Father expects us to resemble Him and His values (Ephesians 5:1). When we become children of God we should resemble our Father. We should talk like Him, think like Him and act like Him (Matthew 5:48). If we step out of phase with the Father we become critical, cantankerous and miserable. This mean streak does not come from our Heavenly Father.

Principle

We should live our lives for the exclusive pleasure of the Lord Jesus.

Application

Godly Christians look for a whole new future with new heavens and earth. They live a different kind of life than their non-Christian neighbors. They live their lives for the exclusive pleasure of Jesus Christ. They change their behavior, interests, habits and company. True Christianity makes an impact on the life and behavior of how we live.

2 Peter 3:12

"...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?"

Peter now comes back to the idea of the expectancy of the believer towards these cataclysmic events.

Christians are to have two attitudes about the "coming day of God:"

1. Look forward for it. 2. Hasten it, anticipate it.

looking for

The third characteristic that a Christian should have toward the coming day of God is to look for it. The day of God is in the future. This speaks of expectancy. We expect the day of God to occur. We look for the advent of Christ and all of its associated events. We wait for the events that God spells out in the Bible. We are on the winning team. The first event of God's prophetic timetable is the Rapture of the church into heaven.

"...looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ..." (Titus 2:13).

The words "looking for" means to await or expect. We are to live expecting the coming "day of God." Are you keenly looking for that day to come? We anticipate the Lord's return. We do not know the time but we know the fact of His coming.

"...so that you come short in no gift, eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ..." (1 Corinthians 1:7).

"For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself" (Philippians 3:20- 21).

"And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, 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" (Hebrews 9:27-28).

and hastening the coming of the day of God

The fourth ingredient of our fourfold walk before God is "hastening the coming of the day of God." The "day of God" follows the "day of the Lord."

This day is the commencement of our place in eternity.

Hastening implies that we can bring the "day of God" more quickly if we live godly lives. We cannot hasten the day of God because it is fixed in His councils. We can, however, be eager and earnest in our anticipation of it. We can translate "hastening" as earnestly desiring. "Earnestly desiring" is a better translation than "hastening." Christians are to hold attitudes of "earnestly desiring" the day of God. Christians are to look forward to the coming day of God. It is not a time of terror for them because this is a time when God will be all in all.

because of which the heavens will be dissolved being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?

God will annihilate the "heavens" and earth and we will enter into the eternal state. We studied this event in previous verses.

Principle

We should live a life of expectation of the coming day of God.

Application

Our hope as Christians is not in the United Nations, Washington D.C. or Ottawa. Neither do we place our hope in the universities of the world. Our hope lies in the coming of Christ. We live in expectation of His coming. The Bible teaches that conditions of the world will get worse and worse until He comes back. He will then straighten out the mess that man left here.

Are you keenly expecting Jesus to put this world in its place? Are you excited about being with God?

2 Peter 3:13

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

Nevertheless we, according to His promise

"According to" means norm or standard. Christians have a promise according to the norm of God's promise. God promised something more than the "day of God" where He will judge the

world. He promised something beyond the day of God; He promised a new earth and heaven.

God promised that we will gain a new earth and new heavens. We hold Him to His promises like we would hold an insurance company who makes a promise to pay up when we need it. He will faithfully fulfill His promise to us.

look for new heavens and a new earth

The words "look for" mean to watch toward, to look for, expect. Christians anticipate new heavens and a new earth. This new creation will not be like this creation with all of its corruption, failure, pain and problems.

Christians will experience "new heavens and a new earth." Our present cosmos will evaporate and a new cosmos will be put in its place. The Greek word for "new" here means fresh. It is not yet used and will always remain new. It seems like no one ever bumps our old car. If we buy a new car it seems that someone always puts a dent on it the first week we buy it. In the new place we will never have a "bump" on our car. There will be no rust, no wear, and no scrapes in heaven. We will never have to buy a new car because it will always be new [the latest and best model as well!].

"For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind" (Isaiah 65:17).

"For as the new heavens and the new earth Which I will make shall remain before Me," says the LORD, 'So shall your descendants and your name remain'" (Isaiah 66:22).

"Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.' 'And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away'" (Revelation 21:1-4).

in which righteousness dwells

"Righteousness" does not dwell down here. Anything but! However we look forward to the day when it will. In that day we will not lock our cars or homes. There will be no police or army there. We will not worry about some wild man launching a gas attack or nuclear launch.

The word "dwell" means to permanently dwell. It carries the idea of to live at home. God permanently dwells at home there. Each Christian will live in the eternal state and will be completely at home with God.

"Righteousness" dwells there because God dwells there. Righteousness is there because the personification of righteousness is there. The new heavens and the new earth will be characterized by righteousness that corresponds with who God is. Heaven is going to be one long experience with that which characterizes God, the righteousness of His essence. God is just, righteous and true. We can count on Him to be true to who He is.

Principle

We believe God will keep His promises according to the norm of His faithfulness to keep those promises.

Application

There is no "righteousness" on earth at this time. This is the Devil's domain (Ephesians 2:1-3). We do not get justice here. We will get our justice there.

Righteousness will pervade every aspect of life in this new home. We can relax completely in the new situation. We will not have any concern about someone undermining us. We can completely relax about people there. No one will carry vindictiveness, implacability, hostility, jealousy, resentment or sour grapes. We will have perfect rapport with people. Our relationships will be full and complete.

Christians have a wonderful future. God made this promise us to it. We hold Him to His promise.

2 Peter 3:14

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

The closing verses of 2 Peter set before us the conduct of Christians in view of the coming of Christ (vv.14-18; compare 3:11).

Therefore

The word "therefore" draws the bottom line. Peter adds up all the truth of the previous thirteen verses. He challenges us to reply to all the truth about the Lord's return, the consummation of God's program for the heavens and the earth and the anticipation of a new heavens and earth.

The word "therefore" means on which account. The "therefore" is the bond between belief and behavior. What the apostates destroyed by their denial of the coming of Christ, believers can fix with their anticipation of the coming of Christ. Peter links character to the expectation of the "coming day of God" and the creation of the new heavens and earth. One day there will come a melt down of the universe as we know it and God will start over with a new one.

Beloved

Peter punctuates this chapter with the word "beloved." He loves his readers even though they almost bought into the lies of the apostates.

looking forward to these things

Peter used the words "looking forward" in the previous verse for anticipating the new heavens and earth thus picking up the argument of the previous verse. In the new heavens and earth we will receive our resurrection bodies.

In general, non-Christians neither know nor care about the things that Christians care about. They may not believe for example, in a coming judgment or they may not believe that God is a God of justice. Meanwhile, the Christian confidently expects great things for the future.

Principle

We should stay expectant and eagerly anticipate Christ's coming.

Application

Spiritual Christians expect the coming of Christ for them. This keeps them at the pinnacle of spiritual performance. They operate at the maximum rather than at the minimum.

Those without Christ have little hope or anticipation of the future. They do not know what the future holds for them. They may be very well educated but spiritually illiterate. Can you call yourself educated if you do not know what will happen to you after death?

"Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Hebrews 2:14-15).

Christians should be not afraid to die. They know their future and take comfort in knowing that their loved one does not lie in the casket. Rather, only their body does. But Non-Christians view death as frightful and horrible because they think of it as the cessation of existence.

be diligent

"Be diligent" means to make effort (2 Peter 1:5,10,15). We make every effort to deal with our lives now because of our anticipation of something new. This is an issue of application.

If we keep short accounts with God, we purify ourselves. If I know that the Lord might come before tonight, I keep myself ready.

"Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure" (1 John 3:2-3).

to be found by Him in peace

In what kind of condition will God find us on the day of God? What kind of relationship will we have with Him? The word "found" means discovered. How will you be discovered on that day?

"Peace" here is an objective, not subjective, peace. This is the peace that Jesus earned for us before God (Romans 5:1). This is another way of referring to the reconciliation He made on the cross.

Peace in the Bible is not stillness but animation--animation without agitation. A person with "peace" is a person with a well-arranged soul. It is

not the absence of problems but the absence of antagonism. The bearings of a person at peace are smooth. Their soul is well greased. Here is harmony of soul that can only break when we get out of accord with God. Harmony depends on cooperation of all the parts. Does your whole being move in harmony with God?

Principle

Christian peace comes from harmony of soul.

Application

When Jesus comes, will He find us in good spiritual health? Although our problem might be as acute as ever, you relax in your soul. You have tranquility in the middle of turbulence. You are at rest.

Some people are so tense that they are about ready to snap. They hold to their problems tenaciously. Why not give them to the Lord?

"...casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7).

Instead many of us risk burnout because we do not let God take our problems. We risk short-circuiting our nervous system. Can you find rest in Him? Make sure there is nothing between you and the Savior or between you and someone else.

without spot

"Without spot" means without defect, without stain, without a mark (1 Timothy 6:14; James 1:27; 1 Peter 1:19). The spot here is unconfessed sin. Make sure that when Jesus comes he will not find you in carnality.

Principle

Expecting the coming of Christ should keep us from unconfessed sin.

Application

God wants us to obey the Word without any infractions of any kind.

"Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself from being polluted [unspotted] by the world" (James 1:27).

Are you flirting with the world? God is in the business of removing spots from Christians, the

baubles and follies of the world. God's spot-remover is the Word of God.

"How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You!" (Psalm 119:9-11).

If we have a spot on a clean shirt, it seems to be all people see. It may be a little drop of salad oil but that is what people focus on. That is the way it is in our lives as well. A little inconsistency, one irregularity, one moment of thoughtlessness, one sentence uttered in haste, and we gain a spot in the eyes of other people and especially God.

and blameless

"Blameless" means without blemish, not open to censure (as in a lamb without blemish--see 2 Peter 2:13). God will not censure us or hold us in adverse criticism when we keep short accounts with Him. He finds no fault with us when we allow the Holy Spirit to fill us with His power.

One day Jesus will present us blameless, without blemish and not open to censure to the Father.

"Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, To God our Savior, Who alone is wise, Be glory and majesty, Dominion and power, Both now and forever. Amen" (Jude 24-25).

Principle

God expects us to be at our best when Jesus comes.

Application

God finds no fault with us when we confess sin. Christians are blameless, not sinless. Many of us have been washed in the blood of Christ but we have not been ironed, so to speak. We still have some spiritual wrinkles. Some of us have more spiritual wrinkles than others. As we become more like Christ, some of the wrinkles begin to go.

Do you have a personal vendetta against someone? This is a wrinkle. This is something about which God will blame you. You are not at your best spiritually.

God takes those wrinkles out of our lives in many ways. At times He blesses us. Other times He disciplines us. He takes out his divine iron but even then some of us will not hold steady while He tries to iron out the wrinkles of our lives. God progressively works on our lives so that we become more like the Lord Jesus every day (2 Corinthians 3:18).

"...that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world..." (Philippians 2:15).

One day we will be sinless. In the mean time, we should sin less. We sin less when we confess our sin and use the Word of God to overcome sin in our lives.

2 Peter 3:15

"...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..."

and consider

The word "consider" means to think something through to a conclusion. The Greek present tense here means to persist in thinking this through until you come to a conclusion.

that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation—

We understand this phrase better when we remember verse nine.

"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" (2 Peter 3:9).

"Longsuffering" means forbearance, patience. Longsuffering is a state of emotional calm in the face of provocation. Though God has much to be provoked about, He holds back His judgment. He is not in the business of vengeance at this time. God does not use revenge tactics. He patiently waits for those who will come to Him through Christ.

Principle

God patiently waits for people to come to Christ.

Application

God gives time for people to come to Him. He is longsuffering. The reason Jesus has not come yet is that there are still people who haven't come to Christ. God is longsuffering because He wants to see those people come to Him. God's longsuffering also leads people to repentance (Romans 2:4).

as also our beloved brother Paul

Peter gives the apostle Paul two characteristics:

1. "Beloved" 2. "Brother"

Notice the respect that Peter gives to Paul even though Paul severely rebuked Peter years earlier in the book of Galatians (2:11-21). Peter had compromised the gospel by accommodating doctrine to please those at Antioch. He showed spiritual timidity. He denied the grace principle and embarrassed himself. So Paul personally and publicly confronted this veteran leader. He did not do this behind Peter's back.

Peter was a leader of the apostles and their spokesman. He evidently sold Paul short. He had not properly estimated the spiritual caliber of the erstwhile Paul of Tarsus. Paul was willing to take a stand for truth even at the cost of risking friendship. Peter had the respect of many throughout the Christian world yet Paul called him a "hypocrite." Still, Peter can still call him "beloved." This is also a statement about the spiritual caliber of Peter.

About fourteen years after Paul rebuked Peter at Antioch, Peter wrote 2 Peter. He calls Paul "our beloved brother." Would you be able to do that? If someone rebuked you publicly, could you say "I love that person?"

We can tell much about the caliber of a man by how he treats his colleagues. Peter calls Paul "our beloved brother Paul." We can imagine how humiliated Peter was when Paul called him a "hypocrite." Yet, he was man enough to admit his mistake and not hold a grudge against Paul. Rather he had a great reputation to uphold, he accepted the rebuke and did not try to justify himself.

Principle

We can tell much about people by the way they treat their colleagues.

Application

Grudge-holding is not right no matter what others have done to us. We cannot afford to harbor an unforgiving spirit in our hearts. We cannot afford to nourish a grudge against someone. It will nullify our spirituality.

What if the Lord came while we were in the middle of grudge match against someone? The Lord might come at any moment. If He should come and find us holding bitterness against someone, He will straighten that out very quickly. Develop a caliber of soul that transcends bitterness.

"Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door!" (James 5:9).

according to the wisdom given to him

"According to" means the norm or standard. God gave Paul wisdom for knowing the revelation of Scripture. In fact, he wrote one half of the New Testament. That is the "wisdom" that God gave him. God chose to give to Paul wisdom in unusual dimension to write much of the New Testament.

This is a significant statement about the canonization of Scripture. Paul is dead at the writing of 2 Peter and his thirteen epistles are complete. Note that Peter recognizes them as part of the canon of Scripture.

has written to you

The church in Peter's day used Paul's writings as Scripture. This is in part how we determine the canon of Scripture. Peter gives the Apostle Paul's writings the credence of Scripture. Paul's letters were known, collected and widely read as the Word of God even in Peter's day.

Peter wrote two books of the Bible while Paul wrote thirteen books. Notice that Peter gives praise to the man who wrote half the New Testament and did not envy Paul. Envy renders us useless for God's service.

Principle

Envy puts leaders on the shelf.

Application

Envy can creep into the heart of any Christian leader. If we permit envy to remain in our heart, it will prevent us from the will of God. God will effectively by-pass us. He will put us on the shelf (1 Corinthians 9:24-27).

The shores of Christian work are strewn with spiritual shipwrecks and those God has disqualified. Their envy probably began with a grudge. Then it extended to belittling and slandering other Christian leaders. Finally, it ended in a state of bitterness. But Peter did not have that kind of attitude. He released his anger. He dealt with it.

Have you severed your relationship with someone because she hurt you? Can you still respect people who hurt you? Peter did.

2 Peter 3:16

"...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"

as also in all his epistles

Peter says that Paul wrote about the same things in all his "epistles."

"All his epistles" refers to the collection of the Pauline epistles already placed into the canon by Peter's time. Thus, the collection of canonical Scripture did not begin with the post-apostolic fathers but with the apostles themselves.

speaking in them of these things

Paul spoke about the subject of 2 Peter in his epistles.

in which are some things hard to understand

The Greek word for "hard to understand" occurs this once in the New Testament. Other literature used this word for something obscure. Peter had difficulty in understanding some of Paul's teaching.

This ought to be an encouragement to some of us since we find some things difficult to understand. Keep at it; it will come. Only "some" things are difficult to understand, not most of what Paul wrote. Though Peter did not have a formal education, he understood most of what Paul wrote. Keep in mind that we will never understand everything about God, if we did, we would have to be as smart as He is.

Principle

Most of the Bible is clear and gives instruction for the improvement of our souls.

Application

The Bible is the only book inspired by God. All other books contain the inspiration of men, and therefore, contain error. But because God inspired the Bible, it is inerrant, infallible and unalterable.

We will have to wait until we get to heaven to understand some things in the Bible. However it is not the Scripture passages that I cannot understand that disturb me, but those passages that I do understand. We read Scripture to critique our souls. We may not like this process, but it is crucial to our spiritual growth.

"For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12).

If we allow the Bible to work in our souls, we will be the better for it. If the Bible does not change us, it is because of our unwillingness to listen. We think the poignant passages of the Bible are for someone else: "Oh, that is something that Mrs. Jones needs to hear."

which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction

The Greek word for "untaught" occurs only here in the New Testament. These "untaught" types were neophytes in New Testament truth. Many people are biblically illiterate. But we cannot afford to be ignorant of Scripture if we are going to grow spiritually.

"Unstable" people also have a problem with the Bible. This word occurs twice in the New

Testament--both times in 2 Peter (2:14, "unstable souls"). They believe one thing one day, and another thing the next. They have no sure foundation upon which they can rest. Unstable people have difficulty with the Word of God. They constantly waver in their views and attitudes.

The "untaught" and the "unstable" distort Scripture. The word "twist" means to wrench or distort. The Greeks used this term for the ratchet wrench whereby they placed a person on a torture rack. This instrument tore muscles and broke bones. A body that went through this process came out deformed, twisted and gnarled. In this verse, "twist" means to torture Scripture. Often those who know the Bible the least, distort it the most.

"But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God" (2 Corinthians 4:2).

There are those who "distort" the Word of God by handling it deceitfully. They are not fair to the Bible. They make it say what it does not say. They take the Bible out of context and read their own theology into the passage [eisegesis].

Christians place the entire significance of their souls upon the support of the naked, infallible Word of the living God. The Bible is the only book that tells us we have eternal life by grace, by the finished work of Christ on the cross for our sins. In it, we learn that man has no character or good works which can impress God in any way.

"...having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever..." (1 Peter 1:23).

Principle

People twist Scripture according to their biases.

Application

Do you distort Scriptures for your own purposes? Some people learn a thing or two about Scripture and all of a sudden they become world experts about the Bible.

More people attack the Scriptures than any other book on earth. More Bibles are burned than any other religious book. So-called "religious scholars"

twist Scripture to make it teach what they want it to teach. However, the infallibility of Scriptures makes it withstand all these attacks. What other reason could we give for the Bible living today in the hearts and lives of people? The Bible is still the best selling book in the world.

as they do also the rest of the Scriptures

Unstable people not only distort Paul's doctrine, but they distort the works of other Bible writers as well.

Note that Peter regards Paul's writing as "Scriptures." The Bible is the only book that God inspired and it is the only book ever written that does not have even one error within its pages. We build our faith on an infallible book.

Critics of the Bible pit Peter against Paul. They say that Peter was a legalist and Paul preached grace. They say the two apostles hold to different theologies. This verse reveals their error.

Principle

The Bible is the only infallible book on earth.

Application

There are no infallible people. Christian leaders are fallible. But God has preserved the Bible through all of this. That is a miracle in itself.

2 Peter 3:17

"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..."

We come now to the conclusion of 2 Peter. The last two verses sum up what Peter wants his readers to know. This is not a formal conclusion like other epistles. Peter does not say "goodbye" to anyone personally.

The last two verses comprise a warning ["beware"] and a directive ["grow"]. First, we come to the warning in verse seventeen.

You therefore, beloved

In his final statement to his readers Peter make another endearing statement to them. This is the fourth time in chapter three that Peter uses the term "beloved." He now draws a conclusion for those he loves.

since you know this beforehand

Peter reminds his readers of something they already know. To be forewarned is to be forearmed. If we know how to handle something before it occurs, we are better prepared to deal with it.

The words "know this beforehand" is one word in the Greek and means know in advance. Peter wants us to anticipate something. He wants us to know something about this subject before it happens.

beware

When we approach a red light, we prepare to stop. We soon learn that if we constantly run red lights, our life on this earth will be short. This passage is the equivalent of a flashing red light. There is danger -- "beware."

The Greeks used "beware" as a military term. In this context, it is a warning to be on the alert against instability in their faith.

Principle

To be forewarned is to be forearmed.

Application

Many Christians are very unstable in their faith. They know little of the Scriptures and are subject to spiritual seduction. As well, a stable believer today may be an unstable believer tomorrow. Faith without knowledge easily disintegrates.

We should stand guard against a wobbly faith and prevent the erosion of belief. People out there will try to ambush your faith. Christians in the twenty-first century often do not know doctrine and become vulnerable.

Are you running the red lights of the Word? Are you heading toward spiritual destruction?

lest you also fall

The idea of "fall" implies that there was a point of stability in the past. The word "fall" is a term of apostasy. The book of Acts uses "fall" as a nautical term for a ship out of control or drifting off course (Acts 27:17,26,29,32). The Word of God cannot "fall away" from the purpose God gave it (Romans 9:6). There are those who fall from grace (Galatians 5:4).

"You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace" (Galatians 5:4).

"Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God;..." (Hebrews 3:12).

A person who gets off course spiritually ends in spiritual weakness. "Unprincipled" (wicked) men will attempt to lead people away from confidence in the truth. They will attempt to make us abandon our relationship with God and His Word. This will blow us off course from God and will shipwreck our souls. We will run our spiritual ship aground.

Principle

Instability ends in distortion of truth and spiritual ruin.

Application

It is possible to fall from our soundness in Christ and lose our assurance of salvation. False teaching will water down our faith. We cannot lose our salvation but we can lose the assurance of our salvation (2 Peter 1:10).

A stupid person is an unstable person. Stupid Christians are unstable Christians. Stupid Christians distort Scripture to their own ruin. All this starts with ignorance of the Word and then ultimately leads to spiritual ruin.

If we run into a difficult situation and do not know Scripture, we will distort the truth that we know. We will find ourselves in a jam. Instead of appropriating the principles of God's Word to our experience, we will jump toward some panacea.

On the other hand, if we "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (v.18), we will gain spiritual stability.

from your own steadfastness

There are two dangers Christians might face with false teachers. The first is that they may lose their stability.

Instability will unhinge our souls. Our souls will become like the wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

The word "steadfastness" means to set firmly and carries the idea of fixedness. It is a state of security and safety.

Peter is saying that his readers should get a firm hold on the Word of God.

"For though I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ" (Colossians 2:5).

This phrase is not referring to falling from salvation but falling from stability in the faith. God is able to keep us from falling.

"Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, To God our Savior, Who alone is wise, Be glory and majesty, Dominion and power, Both now and forever. Amen" (Jude 24-25).

Principle

We gain solidity of soul by knowing God's Word.

Application

Some of us neglect our faith. We rarely study the Bible. When a crisis comes, we are great candidates for false teaching and distortions of Christianity. We do not attach the anchor of our souls to anything. Our anchor floats in the water and the boat of our soul tosses furiously with every new religious wind that comes from afar.

The only way to gain stability of soul is to know God's Word.

being led away with the error

"Led away" means carried away (Galatians 2:13). Some people roam about spiritually without direction. They wander about without any fixed idea of truth (2 Thessalonians 2:11).

"Being led away" carries the idea of group psychology. When a group gets going, it can spiritually seduce an individual into frenzy. False teachers always try to get crowd psychology going. People find comfort in the crowd. Peter says this can be deadly. Some people allow themselves to be "carried off" by error. Error enamors them. It is attractive to them.

"Error" is something that deceives. The Bible translates "error" as "deceive" and "delusion." Error can be subtle. It can snare people before they know it. They find themselves in theological left

field before they realize what they bought into (2 Thessalonians 2:10).

"And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie..." (1 Thessalonians 2:11).

"We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error" (1 John 4:6).

"Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah" (Jude 11).

of the wicked

The word "wicked" means lawless, unprincipled people. These people fly in the face of the establishment. They violate established principles. They rebel against principles whether human or divine. Many people fly in the face of the Bible.

Principle

Many people are impressed by the crowd rather than by the Word of God.

Application

Cults love to prey on unhappy, dissatisfied Christians who never learned the Bible for themselves in any solid way. The crowd always impresses these people. They do not think for themselves. They do not root their thinking in solid biblical teaching.

Many people in the first part of this century did not know Bible doctrine. Consequently, when liberals came to their pulpits, either they were enamored with this new teaching or they did not know enough truth to counteract it so they were led away into false doctrine.

Many distorted and unbiblical ideas float about evangelical Christianity today. Few know how to address these ideas biblically.

2 Peter 3:18

"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen"

but grow

This verse begins with a contrast to verse seventeen. We need to "beware" (v.17) but we also need to "grow" (v.18). Some Christians never grow. They do not advance much beyond the point of their salvation.

The word "grow" means to increase, to augment. Growth is not an event; it is a process. Salvation is an event, but growth is a process. The word "grow" is a command. It is not an option. The grammar also indicates that we are to keep on growing.

Principle

Growth is a process of becoming more like the Lord Jesus.

Application

After we become Christians, we have a tendency to pick up spiritual childhood diseases. We may even acquire some permanent spiritual scars from those diseases. Some people develop so many scars that they are afraid to make further spiritual advance. Others advance through the troubled teen period spiritually. That is spiritual adolescence. They are half teen, half adult. Finally, a few reach spiritual maturity. This is the point when we become spiritual adults.

The Christian life is like a bicycle; unless we keep moving we fall off. None of us ever arrives at a state of spiritual perfection, but we should grow to be more like Christ every day. This is a lifelong process. The Spirit of God takes the Word of God and makes the child of God like the Son of God (Romans 8:29). This is progressive sanctification.

Some Christians develop much faster than others do. Their rate of growth is rapid and expeditious. These people usually have a great desire to change their lives. They hold the Word of God in high regard (1 Peter 2:2). They believe God can change their life. They appropriate truth to their experience daily. They cannot help but change into the same image of Christ from glory to glory by the Spirit of the Lord (2 Corinthians 3:18).

"But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to

glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Corinthians 3:18).

Do you have a case of arrested spiritual development? Is your spiritual growth stunted? Are you developing your spiritual muscles? Do you work out physically but rarely work out spiritually? If we are going to grow, it must be our passion. It cannot be something that we give heed to once a week. We need to work at becoming more spiritually mature. It is not something that comes naturally. God supernaturally must change us through His Word.

We never fully arrive at perfection in the Christian life, but if we continue to grow, we will never be static either.

in the grace

There is a category where Peter is especially concerned that we grow--we need to grow in grace.

The word "in" indicates the sphere in which we are to grow. There are two spheres where the Holy Spirit wants us to grow: in grace and in knowledge. First, God wants us to grow in grace. We owe all that we have to what Jesus did for us.

Principle

God wants us to grow in the entire sphere of understanding and application of the grace principle to our lives.

Application

It is not easy to grow in grace because there is the natural tendency to do it on our own. Grace means God does the doing. Works means we do the doing. We do not like to depend on God because we like the idea of being self-sufficient.

"So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified" (Acts 20:32).

"Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16).

and knowledge

Growth in "knowledge" is the second sphere where we are to grow. Grace was the first sphere.

Growth comes from special knowledge-- knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The more we know Him, the more we love Him. Knowing Him endears us to Him.

Principle

The more we know the Lord Jesus, the more we will love Him.

Application

We cannot grow apart from knowledge. We often hear the notion that we do not need more "knowledge" but more application. People who make this statement have not paid close attention to the Bible because the Word of God repeatedly challenges us to gain more knowledge.

It is a false dichotomy to place knowledge and experience in tension with each other. God does not ask us to choose between the two. We cannot apply what we do not know. Neither can we allow knowledge to die within our bones and not apply it to our lives. Both of these notions are false.

"And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (John 17:3).

"That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death..." (Philippians 3:10).

Decades after Paul came to Christ, he kept growing in knowledge of his Lord. Paul came to know Jesus as Savior. He spent the rest of his life seeking to know Him as Lord.

Our Lord is of such magnitude that we cannot know everything there is to know about Him in a short period. It is a process that will go on throughout time and eternity.

We cannot know everything about a person even in an extended engagement. Even marriage takes time to come to a full understanding of our partners. Communication is the process of self-revelation. The more we disclose ourselves, the better we know each other. The more we understand the Lord Jesus, the greater fellowship we will have with Him. The more we know the Lord, the more we love Him.

of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Second Peter is the only book that describes Jesus with the title "Lord and Savior." This title occurs four times (1:11; 2:20; 3:1,2). Peter never reverses these titles -- "Savior and Lord." "Lord" always comes before "Savior."

"Lord" here refers to His deity. This means that He has absolute right over our lives. The New Testament refers to Him as "Lord" 633 times!

Principle

Since Jesus is God, we must capitulate to the Lord of Glory.

Application

Jesus' deity implies that He has authority over our lives. He has rights over our body, our family and our job or business. This explains why there is such a dearth of genuine Christian living. Jesus is never satisfied with just being our "Savior;" He wants to be our "Lord."

Have you capitulated to the Lord of Glory? Have you moved off the throne of your life? Is Jesus the King of your heart? When you come to this place, then your reputation is not very important (Matthew 10:37,38). You give that to Him. The Lord Jesus demands your all. This is unconditional surrender to Him.

To Him be the glory

Jesus deserves glory because He did the doing. We should glorify Him now in time and in eternity for doing what He has done.

Note other doxologies that glorify Christ (2 Timothy 4:18; Revelation 1:6; 5:13; 7:10).

both now and forever.

It is possible to glorify the Lord in time and in eternity. If we get a good start glorifying Him now, we will establish a pattern for eternity.

Amen

"Amen" means I believe it. Peter lets us know where he stands personally on glorifying Jesus Christ in time and eternity.

Principle

The ultimate purpose of our lives is to glorify God in time and eternity.

Application

We glorify God because of who He is and what He does. We glorify Him because He made every provision we need for time and eternity.

We glorify the Lord because He loves us whether we fail or succeed in the Christian life. What we do does not determine God's love for us. When we attempt to transfer to God human love patterns, we distort who He truly is. God's love for us is constantly at a maximum place. His love never changes, although we may fail Him miserably.