

Introduction

- There have been scholars, both in ancient and modern times, who have questioned the authenticity of this epistle. I will list some reasons for their doing so.

(1) They call attention to the divergence in the style of writing between this epistle and First Peter.

(2) They ignore the many similarities between the two epistles, and, instead, stress the differences. In doing so, they conclude that Peter was not the author.

(3) It is a close resemblance to the book of Jude. Therefore, some suggest that it is a 'late copy' or 'adaptation' of that work. Yet, Second Peter was formally acknowledged as belonging to the canon of scripture by the Council of Carthage in A.D.397.

- It's likely that Peter did not have the assistance of Silvanus in this work, as he did in the first epistle. If that were the case, he may have been forced to rely on his own writing. Without doubt he knew Greek, as did most Galileans, but he may not have been able to write it easily.

- Peter does not tell us where he was when he wrote this letter, but the consensus is that it was while he was a prisoner at Rome, where, at the time, he was facing imminent death. Soon thereafter he was martyred by an edict of the wicked Emperor Nero. According to tradition, it was at Peter's own request that he was crucified upside down, feeling he was not worthy to be crucified in the same manner as that of his Lord and Savior.

- The first epistle was written to convey a message of hope to believers in the midst of severe suffering, persecution, and repression. The second epistle deals with the peril of apostasy, which was seen to be a much greater threat.

Chapter one

V.1. 'Simon (Symeon) Peter, a servant (love slave; bondservant) and an apostle of Jesus Christ'. Peter includes both his Jewish name (given him at birth) and the symbolic Christian name given him by Christ Jesus (**Matt.16:18**). Sinners are born into 'slavery to sin' at physical birth, but into a loving servitude relationship to Jesus Christ at regeneration. Yet, on several occasions Peter was still more like the 'old Simon' than the 'new Peter'. Note: Peter described himself in his first letter as 'an apostle of Jesus Christ' (**1:1**). In this letter, he again claims that title, but he now adds the lowlier title of 'servant'.

- A 'bondservant' is one who serves another to the disregard of his own interests. Before accepting Christ in salvation, the sinner serves Satan to his own detriment. But after being born-again, the believer serves the Lord with the thought, 'Nothing matters about me, so long as the Lord Jesus is glorified'.

- 'To them that have obtained (Gr. *langchano* - 'been chosen to a position by divine will or by lot') like precious faith with us (the same salvation he had experienced) through (in) the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ' (our God and Saviour Jesus Christ). This 'faith' was obtained, not by the efforts of man but by the righteousness of our God. Peter is declaring that Jesus is God, as much so as the Father is God, and the Holy Ghost is God. This was a 'doctrine' in the early church that was difficult for many to accept, inasmuch as Jesus was man and dwelt among the people. Note: In all likelihood, the term 'like precious faith' speaks of the fact that both Jews and Gentiles enjoyed the same 'faith', and therefore, the same benefits in Christ Jesus.

V.2. 'Grace (unmerited divine favor) and peace (a state of tranquility) be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord'. When believers diligently seek after a deeper knowledge and understanding of God, He multiplies to them grace and peace. Note: Many believers, no doubt, would like to have more of God's grace manifested in their lives, and, a greater peace in times of trouble; but are unwilling to put forth the needed effort. We learn of Him through His Word, through prayer, and through the fellowship of God's people. He stirs within the heart of a Christian the desire for the knowledge of God and satisfies that desire by revealing more of Himself.

Vs.3,4. 'According to (seeing that) his divine power hath given unto us all things (everything needed) that pertain unto (having reference to) life and godliness through the knowledge of him that hath called us (this call, when mentioned in the NT epistles, often refers to the call to salvation, and, at times, to go on to holiness or a closer walk with the Master) to glory and virtue'. Through that full and holy knowledge, which is granted to those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, He gives all things necessary for a Christian to live a life of holiness and victory.

- 'Whereby are given unto us (whereby he hath granted unto us) exceeding great and precious promises'. It is through God's 'glory and virtue' that these wonderful promises are given. Note: It's believed that Peter had in mind the promise of Jesus' Second Coming. Yet, Christ promised 'forgiveness' to the sinful, 'rest' to the weary, 'comfort' to the sad, 'hope' to the dying, and 'everlasting life' to those who continue in the faith. Amen! What a mighty God we serve!

- 'That by these (promises) ye might be partakers of the divine nature (the believer becomes a sharer in the richest of all treasures, the nature and life of Christ), having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust'. Note: Peter mentions two specific gifts: 'escaping corruption' and 'partaking of the divine nature'. 'And these two aspects of the Christian life must go on simultaneously, as each implies and requires the other' (Pulpit Com.).

Vs.5-7. Peter urges these young believers to continue on in divine grace; and he lists seven 'qualities' which will be helpful in developing their Christian faith.

V.5. 'And beside this (for this very reason), giving all diligence (after having been made partakers of the Lord's divine nature the Christian is to 'make earnest effort' to make faith grow), add to your faith (supply more than is barely demanded) virtue (holy moral courage, which enables the believer to act with boldness in Christian service); and to virtue knowledge (discretion, a right understanding, that knowledge which is anchored in the truth);

V.6. And to knowledge temperance (self-control, not just in their daily lives but for a lifetime); and to temperance patience (perseverance, endurance, strength of character); and to patience godliness (reverence for God, or holy fear of God);

V.7. And to godliness brotherly kindness (the unfeigned love of the brethren; 'for every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him' - **1 Jn. 5:1**); and to brotherly kindness charity (love). 'Along with faith, love is the supreme mark of the Christian. Everything originates in faith and culminates in love - **1 Cor. 13:13**' (David Jeremiah). Note: Christian love must not be confined to just the body of Christ. It is especially important for Christians to love one another, but it must not stop there. Love comes from God, He Who is love. And His love is without limits. Therefore, the love we learn from Him will be like His love.

V.8. 'For if these things be in you, and abound (if we make the graces, mentioned in the previous verses, our own through the Holy Spirit, we will be effective and productive), they make you that ye shall neither be barren (idle) or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ' (for the divine power of God is with you). Love, the crown of all the graces of Christian character, is 'spiritual energy'. And because that is true, it, along with the other virtues mentioned, will not allow the Christian to be idle (ineffective or unfruitful).

V.9. 'But he that lacketh these things (for he who no longer possesses these Christian characteristic) is blind (has been forgiven of his sins, but is yet without these graces; has not continued on with the Lord), and cannot see afar off' (is short-sighted; spiritually blind; unable to see God, only himself). 'Such a man sees the things of time, and fails to discern those of eternity. This nearsightedness is destructive of a true Christian experience, and therefore makes advance impossible' (Morgan). Note: The person who fails to continue on with the Lord will die, spiritually.

- 'and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins' (forgotten how sinful he was, and how much he needed forgiveness; forgotten the tremendous cost Christ paid on the cross for his redemption; forgotten the joy that filled his heart when he was made a new creature in Christ Jesus, and was adopted into the family of God). How sad. Note: One of the most dangerous doctrines taught in today's church is that of 'Unconditional Eternal Security', often known as 'Once Saved Always Saved'. Jesus, on His last night with the disciples before being put to death on the cross, said, 'Every branch in me (the only way to become a branch in Christ is to be born again) that beareth not fruit (that does not continue on with the Lord to become more and more like Him) he taketh away' (**Jn.15:2**). Jesus goes on to say, 'If a man abide not in me (fails to continue on with me; fails to 'deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me'), he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered, and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned' (**Jn.15:6**).

V.10. 'Wherefore (because of the exhortation in verses five through nine) the rather, brethren, give diligence (be even more diligent; make it your business) to make your calling and election sure'. Note:

The 'calling' and 'election' are God's part, but making them 'sure' is man's responsibility. Therefore, if we continue to love God and strive for the mastery of the aforementioned Christian qualities, we can rest assured concerning our present standing with the Lord, and, of our future welcome in His eternal kingdom. Amen! I like the way the songwriter expressed his assurance in knowing that he was a saved person on his way to heaven:

I know, I know, There's no doubt about it,
He lives in my heart, and I'm going to shout it;
I know, I know, My sins are forgiven,
And I'm on my way to that place that's called heaven.

- 'For if ye do these things (give diligence in making your calling and election sure), ye shall never fall' (stumble; not lose your way; not be cast away). It's wonderful to know that we don't have to fail! We don't have to live in uncertainty! We don't have to wake up each morning and wonder if we are ready to meet the Lord! We can know! That's how the apostle Paul had such a wonderful final testimony: 'I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith' (**II Tim. 4:7**).

V.11. 'For so (for thus, in this way) an entrance (the way into, and there is but one way - **Jn.14:6**) shall be ministered unto you abundantly (you will be given a triumphant admission) into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ'.

V.12. 'Wherefore I will not be negligent (I will not hesitate) to put you always in remembrance of these things' (to remind you of this again and again). Peter wanted his readers to fully understand the importance of their being obedient to all the truths and duties which he had been describing.

- 'Though ye know them, and be established in the present truth' (the truth which is with you). **Note:** 'Establish' is the same word translated 'strengthen' in **Lu.22:32**, when Jesus told Peter, 'when thou art converted (when you have returned to me), strengthen thy brethren'. Here, Peter fulfills that command of Jesus by endeavoring to establish and strengthen the believers in the faith.

Vs.13,14. 'Yea, I think it meet (Yes, I think it is right), as long as I am in this tabernacle (tent, temporary dwelling place, mortal body), to stir you up (cause you to wake up, to arouse) by putting you in remembrance' (by continually reminding you).

- 'Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle (I know my tent must be folded up soon and laid aside), even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me' (signified unto me). Peter regarded his earthly body as a 'tent', and the tent was now old, worn out, and could not last much longer. Undoubtedly, Peter felt the hour of which the Lord had spoken was near at hand (**cf. Jn.21:18,19**).

V.15. 'Moreover I will endeavor (give every effort, do my best) that ye may be able after my decease to have these things (the Christian virtues of verses 5-7) always in remembrance'.

- A summary of verses 12-15: 'I realize my life is almost over, that I will soon be put to death as the Lord shewed me years ago. But as long as I am allowed to remain, I feel I must keep reminding you of the conditions that must be met in order for you to live in victory and enjoy an eternity with the Lord. In fact, I want to make these truths so clear that you will continue to remember them after my death, after I'm gone'.

Vs.16-18. 'For we have not followed (pursued a line of thought to its conclusion) cunningly devised fables' (cleverly devised legends, myths, half truths). **Note:** There were many legends and religious myths circulating among the people in that day. But the Christian faith was not the result of such, as the false teachers claimed.

- 'When we made known (imparted new revelation) unto you the power and coming (coming in power) of our Lord Jesus Christ'. 'The gospel is not a cunningly devised fable. These are not the words of one who hath a devil, nor the contrivance of any number of men who by cunning craftiness endeavour to deceive. The way of salvation by Jesus Christ is eminently the counsel of God, the most excellent contrivance of the infinitely wise Jehovah; it was he that invented this way of saving sinners by Jesus Christ, whose power and coming are set forth in the gospel, and the apostle's preaching was a making of these things known' (Matthew Henry).

- 'but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount'.

- Peter was an eyewitness to the majesty of Jesus on many occasions, but it's likely that the one which stood out the most in his heart and mind was what he, along with James and John, witnessed on the Mount of Transfiguration. About a week after Christ told his disciples about how he must suffer (**Matt.16:21**), He was transfigured in their presence. First the suffering; then the glory. Two patriarchs of the Old Testament (Moses and Elijah) also appeared before them. Too, they heard the voice of God the Father speaking from heaven, saying, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him' (**Matt.17:5**). Note: These words from heaven clearly put Jesus above the Law and the Prophets. Jesus was not merely another, or even a better lawgiver or prophet, He was, and continues to be, the 'beloved Son', the 'only begotten' of the Father.

- Just as God was well pleased with His Son, who humbled himself and became obedient unto death, I believe He is well pleased today with those to whom the only begotten Son has given power to become His children (**Jn.1:12**). Amen! What a wonderful joy and privilege it is to be a part of the family of God!

V.19. 'We have also a more sure (more firm, more stable, well established) word of prophecy'. 'Prophecy is a surer evidence of Divine revelation than miracles' (Adam Clarke). 'The testimony of God's word about Jesus was even more sure than Peter's personal experience' (Guzik). 'The authority of Scripture is greater than an angel's voice and of equal authority with God's audible voice' (Evangelical S.S. Com.). Peter declares the Old Testament prophecies to be more dependable than a voice from heaven heard by the natural ear or even the signs and wonders which he had seen. He ranks Scripture over experience. (I agree with each of these interpretations.)

- 'whereunto ye do well that ye take heed (pay attention)'. Note: It's been said that there are some 332 distinct Old Testament predictions regarding the Messiah that Jesus fulfilled perfectly. The combination of this evidence together, from a simple statistical perspective, is absolutely overwhelming.

- 'As unto a light (lamp or torch) that shineth in a dark (dry, parched, squalid) place'. Note: The Greek word translated 'dark' is found only here in the New Testament. The Bible often compares itself to a 'light', or 'lamp'. King Solomon said, 'For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life' (**Prov.6:23**). The 'Word' is a light that dispels darkness and teaches us how to live.

- 'Until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts'. Note: There are differing opinions as to the meaning of the 'day dawning' and the 'day star arising in your hearts'. Some believe these simultaneous images mark the Second Coming of Christ, which were foreshadowed on the Mount of Transfiguration. Another says this refers to the 'coming of the glory of God throughout the universe' and the 'spiritual significance of Christ's actual return'. Others: 'Until the day breaks and the morning star arises to illuminate your minds' (New English Bible). 'When the light of the scripture is darted into the blind mind and dark understanding by the Holy Spirit of God, then the *spiritual day dawns and the day-star arises in that soul*' (Matthew Henry).

- My thinking: 'Until the day dawn (until the witness of the Holy Spirit is received; until the truth of the gospel is accepted), and the day star arise in your hearts' (and Jesus Christ comes alive in your hearts).

Vs.20,21. 'Knowing this first (refers back to the words 'whereunto ye do well that ye take heed'; this is the first principle of truth), that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation' (is its own; is self-originated; is from the speaker's mind, or will, or human impulse; is isolated from all that the Word has given elsewhere; is the result of anyone privately 'untying' and 'loosing' the truth). Note: The same principle is true for the Gift of Prophecy. 'In the Gift of Prophecy, God never speaks to only one person, and always provides confirmation' (Guzik).

- 'For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved (carried along, like a ship being *borne on* by the wind) by the Holy Ghost' (who is the divine author and originator of the Scriptures).

Chapter two

V.1. 'But there were (there arose) false prophets (self-appointed prophets) also among the people' (Israel). Not only were there 'holy men of God' among the Jews, who wrote by divine inspiration, but there were also apostate teachers and false prophets among them, whose prophecies were of their own imagination (they blasphemed God and twisted the truth for their own purposes).

- 'Even as there shall be false teachers among you' (among the church). Peter gives warning, saying, just as Israel had been constantly led astray by false prophets, so the church will be set upon by false teachers.

- 'Who privily (cunningly and secretly) shall bring in (to bring in by the side of; smuggle into the church by deception) damnable heresies' (heresies of destruction; doctrines that will damn the soul). Such heresies not only destroy the soul, they bring ruin both to those who are led astray and to the false teachers themselves. All deviation from truth is 'heresy'.

- 'Even denying the Lord (Master) that bought them (implying that the deniers stand to the Lord in the relation of bondservants; the Lord had bought them; they were not their own, but his, bought with a price - **cf. I Pet.1:18**) and bring (bringing) upon themselves swift destruction' (eternal misery apart from a holy God). 'Those who bring in errors destructive to others bring swift (and therefore sure) destruction upon themselves' (Matthew Henry). Think about it: These 'latter-day heretics' deny the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, He who gave his life on the cross of Calvary to redeem mankind from sin, and, to reconcile man to God. They give no real importance, or significance, to the Lord's death, burial, resurrection, and ascension. They know the truth but reject it. Therefore, their behavior is deliberate.

V.2. 'And many (professed believers) shall follow (pursue to its termination) their pernicious ways' (lasciviousness, sexual immorality, unbridled lust). Such as this has destroyed multitudes during the 'Church Age', and will undoubtedly reach its peak during the great apostasy of the end-time, mentioned by the Apostle Paul (**cf. II Thes.2:3; II Tim.3:1-5**).

- 'By reason of whom (those who follow false teachers) the way of truth (the road of the truth; the path by which the believer in Christ travels) shall be evil spoken of' (reviled at; discredited; blasphemed). Note: Even though the 'way of error' is a destructive way, yet many are ready (even anxious) to walk therein. 'The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people (the Jews) love to have it so' (**Jer.5:31**). How sad.

V.3. 'And through covetousness (uncontrolled greed) shall they with feigned words (words molded at will to suit their vain imaginations; words craftily contrived to deceive) make merchandise of you' (exploit you by presenting a gospel that has self-gratification at its core). 'In order to get money to spend upon their own lusts, they fabricate counterfeit doctrines, false theories, and pretend miracles to deceive' (Dake). 'They use words that can mean whatever anyone wants them to mean, because greed is the name of their game' (Evangelical S.S. Com.).

- 'Whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not'. God determined long ago how he will deal with them. 'The sentence of judgment is for their condemnation; in the foreknowledge of God it has been pronounced long ago' (Pulpit Com.). God, by nature, is a God of truth, and will judge all liars and deceivers (**Rev.21:8, 27**).

- 'And their damnation slumbereth not' (the wrath of God abideth on them). These heretics had passed their probationary season of possible repentance; therefore, their judgment is not lingering, and their destruction is not sleeping. Their doom was now assured.

Vs.4-9. To convince his readers that divine judgment awaits those who willfully disobey God, Peter gives some examples as proof.

V.4. 'For if (since) God spared not the angels (a higher order of beings than man - **Ps.8:4,5; Heb.2:6,7**) that sinned'. **Note:** There is no article before the word 'angels' in the Greek text. The correct reading is: 'spared not angels'. There has been, and continues to be, much discussion and debate as to the 'sin' these angels actually committed. I will mention two theories: (1) It is the original rebellion of the angel Lucifer (Satan) against God, along with the many other angels who rebelled with him (**Isa.14:12-15; Eze.28:12-16; Lu.10:18**). (2) The sin of the 'sons of God' mentioned in **Gen.6:1,2**. Some believe this has to do with the sin of 'fornication', of 'angelic beings' cohabiting with 'daughters of men'. (I disagree with this theory.)

- 'But cast them down to hell' (tartarus; the Greeks taught that this was the lowest hell). Peter tells us that this is the temporary place of punishment for the angels who sinned. **Note:** According to Scripture, angelic beings, as well as mankind, are given a probationary period, a time of choosing and testing that determines future destiny. We have no record as to how long that testing period lasted for angels. But, here, we are told that there were some who failed the test. Man is still living in his probationary period.

- 'And delivered them into chains of darkness'. Josephus (a Jewish historian of Peter's day) speaks of the 'oldest heathen gods as fettered (chained) in Tartarus'.

- 'To be reserved unto judgment' (the final judgment, when they will be cast into the eternal lake of fire). The Antichrist and False Prophet will be cast alive into the 'lake of fire' (**Rev.19:20**) when Jesus returns to the earth at the end of the seven-year tribulation and defeats the armies of the nations that have gathered for war (Battle of Armageddon). Then, after the Lord's millennial reign of peace, Satan will be 'loosed out of his prison (bottomless pit); will be defeated at the battle of Gog and Magog; and, will 'be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone' (**Rev.20:7-10**). Afterwards, God will sit in judgment at the Great White Throne (**Rev.20:11-15**). **Note:** Some believe the 'fallen angels, now in Tartarus', will be judged at the Great White Throne. Others believe, as do I, that these angels will be judged and cast into the 'lake of fire' at the same time with Satan.

V.5. 'And spared not the old world (the ancient world; the people who lived in the time of Noah before the flood), but saved (preserved) Noah the eighth person (refers to the fact that there were but eight people preserved in the ark; God does not destroy the good with the evil; if but a few righteous, the few shall be preserved) a preacher (a herald, or proclaimer) of righteousness (of holiness, being and doing that which is right), bringing in the flood upon (deluged, inundated) the world of the ungodly' (those without reverential awe towards God). **Note:** Noah's great-grandfather (Enoch) had prophesied of this judgment years earlier (**Jude 14,15**).

V.6. 'And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha (cities situated in a country like the 'garden of the Lord') into ashes (reduced to ashes by raining upon them fire and brimstone out of heaven) condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly' (another illustration of God's judgship of His creation). 'He who keeps 'fire' and 'water' from hurting His people (**Isa.43:2**) can make either to destroy His enemies' (Matthew Henry). **Note:** The sins which are most heinous bring the most grievous judgments.

Vs.7,8. 'And delivered (rescued) just Lot (a man fair and righteous), vexed (distressed, wearied) with the filthy (immoral, lascivious, lewd, lustful) conversation of the wicked' (a just man in the midst of a corrupt society).

- '(For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;)' **Note:** In his *Commentary on the Old Testament*, Joseph Benson

said, 'Lot appears to have dwelt sixteen years in Sodom, after he departed from Abraham; a long space to abide in one of the lewdest and most outrageously wicked cities in the world, and not be tainted with their vices'.

V.9. 'The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations'. **Note:** 'The idea here is primarily of those surroundings that try a man's fidelity and integrity, and not of the inducement to sin arising from inward desires' (Strachan). 'The godly are not kept from temptations, but delivered out of them' (Dake). 'There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it' (**Cor.10:13**). 'God rescued Lot because he rejected evil and was repulsed in his soul at the 'filthy conversation of the wicked' (Full Life Study Bible).

- 'And to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished'. **Note:** A better translation: 'and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment'. The wicked are kept like prisoners awaiting the sentencing that will send them to their final and unending destination (eternal lake of fire). (See the story of the rich man and Lazarus in **Lu.16:19-31**.)

V.10. 'But chiefly them that walk (them that pursue a course of action) after the flesh (after the devices and passionate desires of their totally depraved hearts) in the lust of uncleanness (the pollutions of the world), and despise (disdain, look down upon) government' (lordship, all forms of authority).

- 'Presumptuous (daring) are they, selfwilled (arrogant, self-pleasing), they are not afraid to speak evil of (to rail at, revile, blaspheme) dignities' (they do not tremble when defaming those in exalted positions). 'These daring, self-willed men despise all lordship, all glories, whether the glory of Christ, or the glory of the angels, or the glory of holiness, or the glory of earthly sovereignty' (Pulpit Com.).

V.11. 'Whereas (in which case) angels, which are greater in power and might (even angels, which are far superior to these false teachers in strength and power), bring not railing accusation (bring no reproachful judgment) against them before he Lord'. 'The holy angels, who are given responsibility to report to God the actions of fallen angels and wicked men, do not rashly accuse or condemn, but merely report facts as they are without bitterness and railing' (Dake).

V.12. 'But these (false teachers of **v.10**), as natural brute beasts (like animals without reason, having unrestrained passions), made to be taken and destroyed' (born to be captured and killed). Since they function in the flesh, rather than in the spirit, they are like animals.

- 'Speak evil of the things that they understand not (rail in matters whereof they are ignorant); and shall utterly perish in their own corruption' (shall in their destroying surely be destroyed).

V.13. 'And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness (receiving hurt and injury in retribution for that which they have inflicted), as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time' (they think that pleasure consists in the indulgences of the moment; deeming luxurious living in the day-time a pleasure).

- 'Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you'. 'They are a stain and a disgrace, indulging, as they do, in their wanton revelry, even while joining you at your feasts' (Twentieth Century New Testament). 'The false teachers, feigning themselves to be teachers of truth while joining with Christians at church love feasts, were behaving arrogantly and immorally, even on such occasions intended for Christian fellowship' (John MacArthur). Such sinners deceive themselves, but they do not deceive God. **Note:** The church is admonished to be like the Lord, 'not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing' (**Eph.5:27**).

V.14. 'Having eyes full of adultery (having eyes full of an adulterous woman; the picture of a man who cannot see a woman without having lascivious thoughts toward her), and that cannot cease from sin' (unable to stop). 'They revel in imaginations of lustful acts' (Dake). 'The heart is insatiate in lusting and the eye incessant in looking after what may gratify their unclean desires' (Matthew Henry).

- 'Beguiling (enticing, luring, to catch by bait) unstable (wavering, not securely anchored) souls'. Note: The Apostle James said, 'A double minded man is unstable in all his ways' (**Ja.1:8**). That's why it is so important to 'go on to holiness' and get rooted and grounded in the Word.
- 'An heart they have exercised with covetous practices (having a heart exercised in covetousness); cursed children' (children of a curse; liable to the curse of God).

V.15. 'Which have forsaken (left the place where they once were; abandoned; given up) the right way (straight road; the true way; the way of the cross; way of self-denial; way of obedience to God's word), and are gone astray (wandered off the right path), following (treading in one's steps; to imitate one's way of acting; the Gr. verb is *exakoloutheo*, which means 'to follow out to the end'; it is also found in **1:16** and **2:2**, but nowhere else in the entirety of the New Testament) the way of Balaam son of Bosor (Beor), who loved the wages of unrighteousness' (covetous; fell in love with the profits of wrong-doing, preferring wealth and popularity over faithfulness and obedience to God; who was guilty of the greatest of sins - leading others into sin, and that for the sake of his own gain). **'Three great sins of Balaam:** (1) His **'way'**, mentioned here in **v.15; Num.22:7, 17, 37; 24:11**, (2) His **'error'**: Accepting the wages of unrighteousness for his services in giving the secret of how to get God to curse Israel (**v.15; Jude 11; Num. 31:8, 16**), (3) His **'doctrine'**: Taught Balak that if he would give his most beautiful women to the Israelite men and cause them to commit idolatry and adultery that God Himself would curse Israel (**Rev.2:14; Num.25:1-9; 31:8, 16**)' (Dake).

V.16. 'But was rebuked (reproved) for his iniquity (transgression; wickedness): the dumb ass (beast of burden without the faculty of speech) speaking with man's voice (an inarticulate animal speaking with the voice of a man) forbad (checked; stayed) the madness (folly; insanity) of the prophet'.

V.17. 'These (false teachers) are wells (living fountains; springs) without water' (empty; they deceive men with a promise which they cannot fulfill). Note: The word of truth is the water of life. It refreshes the souls of those who receive it. But that which is spread by these false teachers is nothing but emptiness, because there is no truth in them. 'A well without water would be a major disappointment in a hot and dry land. Likewise, false teachers have a pretense of spiritual water to quench the thirsty soul, but they actually have nothing to give' (John MacArthur).

- 'Clouds (clouds without rain) that are carried (driven, as wind driving ships) with a tempest (a violent wind; a squall); to whom the mist of darkness (blackness of the darkness; hell) is reserved for ever' (kept in store forever). Note: These false apostate teachers, like Balaam, are empty, as useless as wells without water and clouds that bring no rain. Mathew Henry summarizes what is stated here with the following statement: 'Utter darkness was prepared for the devil, the great deceiver, and his angels, those instruments that he uses to turn men from the truth, and therefore for them it is reserved, and that for ever; the fire of hell is everlasting, and the smoke of the bottomless pit rises up for ever and ever'.

V.18. 'For when they speak great swelling words (high-sounding, lofty expressions), of vanity (empty; meaningless; a great sound, but little sense), they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness (they entice by appealing to man's physical carnal lustful cravings; they offer a religion that man can embrace and still hold on to his fleshly desires), those that were clean escaped from them who live in error' (false teachers). Note: There are two schools of thought concerning the term 'clean

escaped'. (1) They received the word with joy, embraced it, were saved by grace through faith, and, had become new creatures in Christ Jesus. (2) They were new converts who were just now barely escaping. (I agree with number one, since the word 'clean', mentioned here, is the translation of the Greek 'ontos', which means 'really, actually'.)

V.19. 'While they promise them liberty' (The false teachers promise everything, but deliver nothing. Yet they are still able to allure followers. They promise liberty, not true Christian liberty for service to God, but a licentiousness to sin, to follow the devices and desires of their own hearts. They promise freedom, but freedom can never be found in the flesh, only in the Spirit of God).

- 'They themselves are the servants of corruption'. (They who talked about liberty were themselves not free, but slaves of corruption.)

- 'For of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage'. He who succumbs to the lofty high-sounding oratory of a false teacher (one who is a prisoner himself), in the name of freedom, also becomes a prisoner. 'A man is the slave of anything that masters him' (H. Barrett Montgomery). The Apostle Paul said, ('Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?' **(Rom.6:16)**).

V.20. 'For if after they have escaped (come out from) the pollutions of the world (those things that defile and infect) through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (the way of truth, v.2; the right way, v.15; having heard, believed, and experienced the truth of God's word), they are again entangled (hopelessly entrapped) therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning' (their last state has become worse for them than the first). Note: Those who teach 'Unconditional Eternal Security' (Once saved, always saved) would have us believe that those mentioned here were never truly saved, nor did they go back on God. They had heard of the way of salvation, but had rejected it. Yet, we must understand: a person does not escape the pollutions of the world by just knowing the plan of salvation. This comes only by accepting Christ as Savior.

- 'They are again entangled therein'. The only way they could have been 'unintangled' is to have been saved.

V.21. 'For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them'. It would be better for a person to have never known the joy and blessedness of being saved from sins and living for Christ than to have experienced such a life, and then turn back to the ways of the world.

V.22. 'But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb'. 'What has happened to them proves the truth of the proverb' (Ronald Knox). Note: There has been, and continues to be, a debate among those religious as to whether or not a 'true Christian' can fall away from living a victorious life in Christ, return to a life of sin, and, ultimately be lost forever. **I'm convinced that such as this is not only possible, but is far too often the case. The phrase 'if ye continue' is mentioned over and over in the New Testament. The following are just two examples: (1) 'Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, if ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed' (**Jn.8:31**). (2) 'Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off' (**Rom.11:22**). Note: I encourage you to read **Eze.18:24; 33:12-18; Col.1:21-23, II Tim.4:10**.

- 'The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire' (partially quoted from **Pr.26:11**). Example: A.T. Robertson refers to a story about a hog in ancient literature that 'went to the bath with people of quality, but on coming out saw a stinking drain, and went and rolled himself in it'.

Chapter three

In the first two chapters of his Epistle, Peter warned of false prophets and false teachers in the last days. He now concludes his letter by encouraging and admonishing his readers in view of the Lord's return and the day of the Lord.

Vs.1,2. 'This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you (this Epistle already a second one I write unto you; with the word 'already' implying that the interval between the two Epistles was not very long), in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance'. Note: The thoughts that pass through the Christian's mind should be holy thoughts (**cf. Phil.4:8**).

- 'That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour'. Peter states his purpose for writing. He had already written about the importance of being reminded (**1:12,13**). Now he places the emphasize on what his readers should know in regards to the 'second coming of Christ' and the prophecies having to do with that great event. Peter believed in the inspiration of the Scriptures, of all the words spoken before by the holy prophets. And, he classes the writings of the apostles as being equal in authority to those of the Old Testament prophets.

V.3. 'Knowing this first (not the first in a list, but the primary fact, the preeminent matter) that there shall come in the last days (refers to the times of the Messiah, from his arrival into the world to His 'second coming' at the end of the seven-year tribulation) scoffers' (those who mock, ridicule, scorn).
- 'Walking after their own lust' (living to please self; governed by their own passions; disregarding the truth of God's Word).

V.4. 'And saying, Where is the promise of his coming?' A question is raised: Is this the coming of the Lord in the air to catch away the Church (**cf. I Thes.4:13-17**), or is it the Lord's 'Second Advent', His coming back to earth to reign (**cf. Rev.19:11-16**)? Note: Believers of that day expected the Lord's return in the clouds for His saints to be imminent (at any time). They lived with that expectation; even greeting fellow-believers with the term 'Maran-atha' (which is to say, 'Our Lord cometh'). But the question mentioned here in this verse is not that of believers, but of scoffers in the 'last days'. They will mock at the promise of the Lord's second Advent.

- 'For since the fathers fell asleep (not the Old Testament patriarchs, but the fathers of the Christian Church. It had been more than thirty years since the resurrection and ascension of Christ, and the first generation of believers was fast passing away), all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation' (all things are remaining permanently in the state in which they were from the beginning of the creation). In essence, the scoffers asked, 'Should men continue looking for the Lord's return, even though the fathers, to whom the promise was made, looked in vain?' Note: All things have not always been as they are; there have been great changes.

Vs.5. 'For this they willingly are ignorant of (they willfully forget; they deliberately ignore this fact which follows; they presume that because they have never seen a widespread judgment of God, that there will never be such), that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water'. Creation was by the Word of God. He spoke and creation came into being. 'All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made' (**Jn.1:3**). The same 'Word' that brought the heaven and the earth into existence (**Gen.1:1**) is presently preserving the world for future judgment.

V.6. 'Whereby (through which things, i.e., creation and flood; the Word and water; judgment of earth when Lucifer rebelled against God and was cast out of heaven, at a time between **Gen.1:1** and **Gen.:1:2**, and judgment of the flood) the world that then was (pre-flood world order), being overflowed with water, perished' (was destroyed in a deluge of water). Note: Inasmuch as God does all things well, I believe there was a time-period, far beyond our comprehension, between the first two verses of the Bible.

V.7. 'But the heavens and the earth, which are now' (but the present heaven and earth). Note: There are differences of opinion concerning the words 'which are now'. (1) 'The *now* does not refer to any change wrought by the Flood, but distinguishes the present heavens and earth from the new heavens and new earth, which Christians are to look for (**v.13**)' (Pulpit Com.). (2) 'Peter is saying that things on this earth have not always continued the way they are now. The earth was different when God first created it, and then, it was different again after the flood' (Guzik). (3) 'Mankind, today, lives in the second world order, one in which people have a much shorter life-span than was common before the Flood. Peter is making the point that there is a third form of the heavens and earth yet to come' (John MacArthur).
- 'By the same word (by His Word) are kept (are being carefully kept) in store (gathered and laid up), reserved (guarded, constantly maintained) unto fire (because the heavens and the earth have been contaminated by sin, God has determined to completely destroy them by fire) against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men' (at the great white throne judgment at the end of the Millennium - **Rev.20:11-15**).

V.8. 'But beloved (the apostle had a compassionate concern for those who refused to believe divine revelation, but a deep respect for true believers), be not ignorant of this one thing (you must not ignore this one fact), that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day'. Note: The false teachers argued that the Lord's promised return had not taken place after these many years; therefore, it will not occur. But Peter reminds them that God doesn't look at the passing of time as we do. Not only is He omniscient (all-knowing), omnipresent (everywhere at once), and omnipotent (having all power), He is eternal. With Him, 'there is neither past, present, nor future. He is the **I AM**: I AM in the present; I AM in the past, and I AM in the future' (Spurgeon). 'He can accomplish in one day what we might expect would take a thousand years, or He can take a thousand years to accomplish what we would like to see done in a day' (Full Life Study Bible).

V.9. 'The Lord is not slack concerning his promise (this speaks of God the Father, since only He knoweth that day and that hour (**Mk.13:32**); He will keep his promise, and it will be according to his timing), as some men count slackness' (as some understand the meaning of slackness). Note: God kept the time He appointed for the delivering of Israel out of Egypt to the very day (**Exo.12:21**; **Gal.3:17**), and he will hold to the time appointed in His coming to judge the world.

- 'But is longsuffering to usward' (the apparent delay of the return of Christ is actually a gift of mercy, a sign of His patience). Note: God is giving more time to His own people, whom he hath chosen from the foundation of the world. He allows man as much time as possible to repent.

- 'Not willing that any should perish, but that all come to repentance'. This statement reflects God's heart of love for the world, as revealed in **Jn.3:16**. 'God's waiting is redemptive in its purpose; his basic will is that all might turn from their sin unto him' (Wycliffe Bible Com.). God has no delight in the death of sinners. 'As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live' (**Eze.33:11**).

V.10. 'But the day of the Lord (the future time of judgment) will come (whatever the mockers might say, whatever else may transpire, 'that day' will surely come) as a thief in the night' (at a time which will surprise many).

- 'In the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise (with a rushing and sizzling sound; may be understood as the crash of a falling world), and the elements shall melt with fervent heat (a violent consuming heat), the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up'. Note: God judged the earth in Noah's day with a 'flood'; but in the 'day of the Lord' he will judge it with 'fire'. There is much debate as to the meaning of the 'elements that shall melt', and the 'earth', with its 'works', being burned up. The following are some examples: (1) This has reference to the principles or basic elements of the present world system of evil spirits, sinful and fallen nature, disease germs, corruption, and all elements by which men corrupt themselves'. (I disagree.) (2) 'The destruction of all the elements by means of burning, and the leveling of all earthly constructions'. (3) 'The elements are the atomic components into which matter is ultimately divisible, which make up the composition of all created matter; meaning the atoms, neutrons, protons, and electrons are all going to disintegrate'. (4) 'At the coming of the Lord the visible heavens, unable to abide His glory, shall pass away; they shall undergo a sudden mighty alteration'. (5) 'The elements refer to the four elements of which the universe is composed: fire, air, earth, and water'. (6) 'The elements or rudiments, of which the universe is composed and compacted, will be loosed; that is, the framework of the world will be disorganized'. (7) 'The heavenly bodies shall be scorched up and dissolved'. (8) 'The stars will be set ablaze and melt'. (9) 'The elements will disintegrate in flames'. (10) 'The earth and its contents will be consumed'.

- Too, there are differing opinions as to exactly when 'the day of the Lord' will take place. I'll mention three: (1) It refers to the period between the Lord's return in the clouds to catch away his Church until the rebellion of Satan at the end of the Millennium; (2) It speaks of the last three and one-half years of tribulation (known as the 'great tribulation') and continues through the Millennium; (3) It begins with the Second Advent of Christ, includes the destruction of the present heavens and earth, and, culminates with the creation of the new heaven and new earth (**Rev.21:1**). Note: The earth's renovation will take place - not at the beginning of the 'day of the Lord', but at its end.

V.11. 'Seeing then that (because) all these things shall be dissolved ('this world, as far as we know, will not cease to be; it will pass through the purifying fire of God's judgment and be made anew - Spurgeon), what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness' (it becomes vital for individuals to live holy in their words and actions; saints are obligated to maintain the holy life of separation from the world in which they started the Christian life).

Vs.12,13. 'Looking for and hasting unto (expecting and earnestly desiring) the coming of the day of God), wherein (on account of which) the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless (rather, but) we, according to his promise (**cf. Isa.65:17**), look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness' (in which righteousness is permanently at home; where thy people shall all be righteous). Note: 'According to **Isa.45:18**, the earth was originally created to be inhabited. And this purpose will be realized forever when the natural people who do not rebel with Satan at the end of the Millennium will remain on earth after its renovation by fire and multiply forever, as God intended Adam and his race to do before the fall' (Dake).

V.14. 'Wherefore, beloved (divinely loved ones), seeing that ye look for such things (the coming of the Lord, the restitution of all things, the new heavens and new earth), be diligent (take care, make it your business) that ye may be found of him (before him, in his sight) in peace (at peace with God and with man; the peace which comes only through Christ), without spot, and blameless'. Note: Those Christians

looking for the coming of the Lord must earnestly strive to be like Him, the 'Lamb without blemish and without spot (cf. I Pet.1:19).

Vs.15,16. 'And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation'. 'The longsuffering of God gives opportunity for repentance and thus salvation for the lost who put their trust in the Lord Jesus' (Wuest). God waits that He may be gracious. 'Scoffers count the delay of the judgment slackness; the Christian should count it salvation; it is the salvation of the elect that the judgment tarrieth' (Pulpit Com.).

- 'Even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you'.

Note: The Apostle Paul wrote several epistles to the Christians in Asia. And, here, Peter says the writings of Paul are the Word of God.

- 'As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest (to twist, turn away), as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction'. 'The things that Peter refers to are not listed, so it cannot be known what he would consider hard to understand' (Dake). 'Inasmuch as Paul had a great deal to say about the Second Coming, which is the point here, we assume the connection' (John MacArthur). The Greek word 'ovovorros', meaning 'hard to be understood', occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. 'If men corrupt the word of God, it tends to their own utter ruin' (Matthew Henry). 'Though Peter praised Paul's ministry, he admitted that some things in Paul's writings were hard to understand, and those who were untaught and unstable could use some of the difficulties to their own ends, twisting Scripture' (Gucik). Note: As Christians, we should be like the Bereans, who 'searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so' (**Acts 17:11**).

V.17. 'Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye (although others have gone astray, you continue faithful) know these things before (that false teachers shall arise; the day of the Lord will come), beware (take care, watch out, persevere) lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked (lest, being carried away), fall from your own steadfastness' (there was a real danger of their being involved in the error of those lawless, and losing out with God altogether). Note: If a believer seriously listens to those who teach that which is false, he runs the risk of being led astray. It's sad, but such as this has happened far too often, with many having forfeited their blessed inheritance. The Bible teaches throughout that it is possible for Christians to go astray, to fall into error from their steadfastness (their place in the body of Christ), and be lost spiritually. The Bible does not teach unconditional eternal security. 'Forewarned is forearmed'.

V.18. 'But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ'. To avoid being led astray (fall from Christian steadfastness), the apostle advises believers not only to 'grow in grace' but to 'grow in the knowledge of our Lord' ('follow on to know the Lord' - **Hosea 6:3**; learn more about Him; but more importantly, know Him in a personal relationship). Life is never static (never at a stand-still). As Christians, we must go forward or we will regress (fall backward to our old ways of sin).

- 'To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen'.

