

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER

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I. WRITER: Simon Peter

II. AUDIENCE:

It is assumed that he is writing to the same group he mentioned in his first epistle: addressed to the churches of Asia Minor (1 Peter 1:1) comprised of both Jewish and Gentile Christians.

III. DATE: 67 A.D.

Assumed by most to have been written around 66 or 67 A.D. If Peter was martyred during Nero's Persecution, then this epistle must have been written shortly before his death. He wrote in 2 Peter 1:14, "Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me." He supposedly died a martyr in 67 A.D.

From John Phillips:

Peter wrote his first letter because he was concerned about the *suffering of the* people of God. He wrote his second letter because he was concerned about the *seduction* of the people of God. He was moved the first time by what Satan, the old *lion*, was doing. He was moved the second time by what Satan, the old *liar*, was doing. When he wrote his first letter, the attack was from *without*. When he wrote his second letter, the attack was from *within*, and it was much more serious.

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Outline of 2 Peter

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I. Faith's Convictions (Chapter 1)

Peter seeks to anchor his readers' faith on the Word of God as the only defense against the coming storm of heresy. The full "knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord" is the foundation on which Christian character is built.

A. As to the walk with God (1:1-15)

1. The secret of commencing well (1:1-4)

1:1 - ¹Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:

Peter starts out by calling himself a "servant", choosing the word for "bond slave". He then names those to whom he wrote as those who have "obtained like precious faith", in other words, those who have been saved. Peter uses the word "*precious*" 5 times in his first epistle and twice in his second.

1:2 - ²Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

Peter emphasizes the importance of this "knowledge" of God throughout this epistle. It is the Greek word *epignōsis*, and it means full discernment or acknowledgement. It is a different word than he used in 1 Peter 3:7 for husbands dwelling with their wife according to knowledge (*gnosis*).

This *epignosis*, knowledge of God is a more intense knowledge than the *gnosis* knowledge of a husband of his wife, because it expresses a more thorough participation in the acquiring of knowledge on the part of the learner. Paul also emphasized a knowledge of God:

Philippians 3:8,10 - "... and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: ... That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;"

We are not only to believe on Him, but to know Him, to study Him, to walk with Him. Peter will later in this chapter tell us how this knowledge of God comes to us: through a knowledge of His Word. However, don't confuse simple knowledge of the facts of the Bible with knowing God.

Jeremiah 9:24 - But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me,

J.I. Packer wrote in his book "**Knowing God**":

"Theological knowledge for its own sake is bound to go bad on us. It will make us proud and conceited. But, when people really know God, losses and "crosses" cease to matter to them; what they have gained simply banishes these things from their minds. What other effects does the knowledge of God have on a person? Perhaps the most clear and striking answer is provided by the book of Daniel. Those who know God have great energy for God (Daniel 11:32 - "...the people that do know their God shall be strong and do exploits." Also, those who know God have great thoughts of

God, show great boldness for God, and have great contentment in God.”

We can't love or trust someone we don't know very well. The more we know God, the more we are able love Him and trust Him.

Finally, as in this verse, grace and peace are always in that order: we must first know the grace of God (salvation by grace) before we can experience the peace of God.

Romans 5:1 - Therefore being justified by faith (grace), we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

1:3 - ³According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

We are called to glory and virtue by and through Christ. The **knowledge** of Christ gives us all things that pertain unto life (salvation) and godliness (sanctification). It is only through the knowledge of Christ that we can really learn to live for Christ.

Paul wrote in Philippians 3:10 - “That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death”. He wasn't talking about knowing a list of facts about Christ. He was talking about learning to suffer as Christ did for the sake that others could be saved, all to the glory of God.

Notice in this verse Peter's use of the phrase “hath given unto us all things”: He **already has** given to us all things that we need to be saved and to be godly. The virtue spoken of that we are called to has to do with excellence and courage: having the courage to excel for Christ, standing for God.

1:4 - ⁴Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

Peter wants us to concentrate on all of the amazing promises God has made to us in Christ. The Bible is full of these promises. It is by the promises of God that we are saved and become more like Christ: "that by these (promises) ye might be partakers of the *divine nature*". Being partakers of the divine nature means wanting the things of God.

"Having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust", that corruption that is within our heart. This requires a new nature, God's nature. People tend to become slaves to their lusts. The more they indulge them, the more the appetite grows. The gospel offers a way of escape. The Christian life, as exemplified in the life of Christ, is the very opposite of the corrupt life that this present evil world offers.

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2. The secret of continuing well (1:5-9)

Peter now gives us the secret of continuing to progress in the Christian life.

1:5-7 - ⁵And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; ⁶And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; ⁷And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

Peter explains that the Christian life is not only putting away the sins of the past and the corruption of the world, but also a matter of addition of some things. He wants us to be diligent to add to our faith. We remember that faith without fruit is dead faith (James 2). The "faith" Peter starts out mentioning is saving faith. And to that faith we are to add concurrently not sequentially:

Virtue: moral excellence or strength of character. The English meaning of this word has changed to mean sexual purity, but in the past virtue was characterized the finest Roman soldier: strength, valor, courage, and excellence.

Knowledge: (*gnosis*) to know experimentally. It indicates growth in understanding.

Temperance: self-control (God control of self). As believers, we are to manifest self-control in every area of our lives. It is to be a characteristic of Christians, a fruit of the Spirit.

Patience: cheerful endurance. Endurance as to things or circumstances. Long-suffering is the endurance pertaining to people.

Godliness: holiness, devotion toward God. It is a life which is morally good.

Brotherly kindness: brotherly love. It is a love of the brethren.

Charity: (*agape*) love, benevolence. This love is meeting the need of the person that is loved at one's own expense. It is not just a feeling but generally requires action.

1:8-9 - ⁸For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

Those that lack the fruit mentioned in verses 5-7 are not necessarily lost (as Peter writes they "hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins"), but they are without spiritual discernment ("cannot see afar off"). The knowledge of Christ (in salvation) should bear the above fruit in our lives, but diligence must be given to them. We need to be involved in our spiritual growth.

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3. The secret of concluding well (1:10-15)

1:10-11 - ¹⁰Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: ¹¹For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

What is Peter referring to in verse 10, "give diligence to make your calling and election sure:"? It means to give diligence to making sure we are saved! As Christ said, "Many are called, but few chosen." As we are "giving all diligence" to add those things to our faith courage, knowledge, self-control, patience, godliness, love of the brethren, and love for the lost, we also are to "give diligence" to make our "calling and election sure". Paul wrote of this in 2 Corinthians 13:5

2 Corinthians 13:5 - Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

This is the most important question that we need to answer in our life: Are we saved? We can't just assume it. We are to examine ourselves, examine our profession with the Word of God. It is unpleasant, but profitable. Because, after that self-examination, we either have great assurance or we get it settled!

Romans 8:16 - The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

But if our life does not line up with the life described for a new creature; if the Spirit itself does not bear witness with our spirit; then we need to be open to the idea that maybe we made a false profession.

1:12 - ¹²Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know *them*, and be established in the present truth.

Though these truths are already known, repetition is needed. We live in a world of forgetfulness, always backsliding in our hearts and minds, needing continual reminding and relearning of the truth. We should never get tired of hearing the same truths repeatedly, because we need to hear them over and over again.

1:13-14 - ¹³Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting *you* in remembrance; ¹⁴Knowing that shortly I must put off *this* my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me.

Peter refers to death as "put off this my tabernacle", which is a metaphor referring to our body as merely clothing of the soul "put off" as we enter heaven. He also mentions Christ's foretelling of his type of death (by martyrdom):

John 21:18,19 - Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry *thee* whither thou wouldest not. ¹⁹This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God...

1:15 - ¹⁵Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance.

A preacher diligently proclaims the same truths over and over again while he is alive, so that after his death his flock will never forget them.

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B. As to the Word of God (1:16-21)

1:16 - ¹⁶For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

The apostles did not follow or fabricate stories when they preached the gospel and told of Jesus Christ. Then he specifically mentions the time of Jesus' transfiguration on the mount (Luke 9:28-37).

1:17-18 - ¹⁷For 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. ¹⁸And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.

Peter was there and saw it with his own eyes. He ought to remember it well, since it was his comment that caused the voice of God to speak.

1:19 - ¹⁹We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:

The "more sure word of prophecy" is of course, the Bible. Peter was convinced that scripture was even more sure and trustworthy than his own eyewitness. And we need it as much as a man groping in darkness looking for a light switch. It is "a light that shineth in a dark place (this world)" until the return of Christ.

1:20 - ²⁰Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private (one's own) interpretation.

"Knowing this first" means that what he's about to say is most important to be known: that Scripture is not to be made of any private interpretation. The word private means "his own individual person". So, you could read it as "no prophecy of the scripture is of one's own personal interpretation".

Interpretation means explanation of meaning. What is this saying? We can't just interpret scripture with our own opinion. And yet people do that all the time! We must allow other scriptures to give us the interpretation to any scripture, letting God show us the meaning, instead of inserting our own meaning. No portion of scripture is to be interpreted or explained apart from other references to the same subject. Building a doctrine on one verse is how cults get started. For example,

Acts 2:38 – “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”

That is how the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration gets started – Church of Christ and others.

1:21 - ²¹For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

Not just any man wrote the Scriptures. They were hand-picked of God, "holy men", set-apart for this office and this purpose. And the word “moved” moved implies a much stronger control over them than we might think. It is not just a gentle nudge or push. It is the same word translated “drive” in

Acts 27:17 - "And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let her *drive*

That ship was under the control of the wind and waves. In the same way, the Holy Spirit “drove”, controlled, or “moved” these men to write what He wanted written. This verse tells us three important facts concerning how we got the Bible:

1. It was not invented by man nor man’s ideas – “... came not by the will of man ...”
2. Men of God wrote the Bible – “... holy men of God spoke ...”
3. God authored the Bible – “... as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”

So, the Holy Spirit moved the human writers of the Bible in such a way that they recorded the very words of God without error.

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II. Faith’s Contention (Chapter 2)

A. The doctrine of the heretics (2:1-3a)

2:1 - ¹But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

1. False Teachers: Just as there were false prophets among the people of Israel, there will be within NT churches. Christ warned of false prophets that would arise and false prophets that would enter the churches in sheep's clothing, but inwardly would be ravaging. Matthew 24:

Matthew 24:11,12 - And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

2. Bringing in "damnable heresies": destructive heresies. It is teaching that sends people to hell (i.e. baptism saves, church membership, keeping the law, etc.). Paul calls it “doctrines of devils” in 1 Timothy 4. It is any corruption of the true plan of salvation.

3. Denying the Lord that bought them. This could be denying the Deity of Christ (like many cults), but it could also speak of denying Christ's work of redemption as in teaching a works salvation.

Jude 4 - For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

4. Bring upon themselves swift destruction. God will not put up with their false teaching for long.

2:2 - ²And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.

"Many" will follow their false teachings. Pernicious means "deadly, or destructive". In other words, many will follow them into hell. Also, they will cause many to speak evil of the way of truth.

2:3a - ³And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you:...

Covetousness is their motivation. They consider the ministry as a career. They are in the ministry for the money. Damnation is their ultimate end.

"Feigned" words means "plastic" words, moldable, changeable. It refers to preachers whose words can be molded and shaped by the people they teach, saying what their congregations want to hear. Instead of preaching the unchangeable truth of the Word of God, they say whatever it is they think will gain more people and keep the offerings coming in.

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B. The doom of the heretics (2:3b – 9)

2:3b - whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.

These heretics will soon be judged in God's timing.

2:4 - ⁴For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast *them* down to hell, and delivered *them* into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;

Jude uses this example as well, adding that they "kept not their first estate."

Jude 6 - And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

This is only a theory that many believe to be the case. They say it is likely that this refers to Genesis 6:4 "... and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare *children* to them, the same *became* mighty men which *were* of old, men of renown." They state that some fallen angels were able to have sexual relations with women, whether they possessed the bodies of men or were somehow (leaving their first estate?) able to cohabit with women, resulting in the mighty men of old.

2:5 - ⁵And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth *person*, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;

God judged the world with a Flood, saving only Noah and his family, the preacher of righteousness.

2:6-8 - ⁶And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned *them* with an overthrow, making *them* an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; ⁷And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: ⁸(For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed *his* righteous soul from day to day with *their* unlawful deeds;)

God destroyed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah as an example to those that after should live ungodly. We read that God delivered "just" Lot (yes, he was saved). By putting himself among the sin of Sodom, he "vexed" (tormented or afflicted) his "righteous" soul, meaning he was truly saved. Notice Lot himself was responsible for vexing his soul by being there.

When faced with the decision of where to live, instead of bowing his head in prayer and seeking God's will, Lot lifted up his eyes and made the decision based on where he could make the most money. He first set his tent toward Sodom, and eventually lived in Sodom.

He won no one to Christ while there and his sons in law laughed at him when he said the LORD was about to destroy the city. Those married daughters died and so did his wife whose heart was in the city when she turned back and became a pillar of salt. It so corrupted his two unmarried daughters that they thought nothing of committing incest with him: the result being 2 of the most wicked nations in the Old Testament and enemies of the nation of Israel (Moabites and Ammonites).

2:9a - ⁹The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations,...

God knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations:

1 Corinthians 10:13 - 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.

2:9b - ... and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:

And God knows how to reserve (to keep an eye on, watch, guard, keep) the unsaved, the lost unto the day of judgment to be punished.

C. The deeds of the heretics (2:10-22)

1. An exposure of their conduct (2:10-14)

2:10 - ¹⁰But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous *are they*, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.

1. Walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness. Simply put, they are vulgar and vile.

Jude 16 - These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts;

2. They despise government (rebellious). They despise authority; pastoral authority.

Jude 8 - Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.

3. Presumptuous means daring or bold, self-willed means they are going to "do their own thing", not afraid to speak evil of dignities meaning to speak evil of those in spiritual authority.

2:11 - ¹¹Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord.

These false teachers are so lifted up with pride that they do something that angels don't dare to do.

Jude 9 - Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.

2:12 - ¹²But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption;

1. Are like wild animals: man is capable of behaving worse than an animal.

2. Made to be taken and destroyed: they have reached the place where they are hopeless and deserving to be destroyed.

3. Speak evil of things that they understand not: They have been exposed to the truth, but never grasped it or embraced it. So, they put it down and criticize it.

4. Shall utterly perish in their own corruption.

2:13 - ¹³And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, *as they* that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots *they are* and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you;

1. Will receive the "reward of unrighteousness":
2. Count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Pleasure seekers.
3. Spots and blemishes as they feast.
4. Sporting themselves with their own deceiving: they make a sport of sin and enjoy living in sin.

2:14 - ¹⁴Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children:

1. Eyes full of adultery (or eyes full of an adulteress). This could be speaking of sexual adultery or maybe more likely spiritual adultery (idolatry).
2. Cannot cease from sin. They're addicted to their sin.
3. Beguiling unstable souls: either alluring them by their immorality to embrace their false doctrines, promising them pleasures and carnal liberties.
4. Hearts exercised with covetous practices: a heart wholly intent upon getting gain, accustomed to it, and skillful in it.
5. Cursed children: "children of the curse".

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2. An exposure of their claims (2:15-19)

2:15,16 - ¹⁵Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam *the son of Bosor*, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; ¹⁶But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet.

Balaam knew it was not God's will to curse Israel, yet loved money enough that he taught Balak that the way to get Israel to fall into God's wrath was to get Israel to commit fornication and idolatry. These men, for the sake of money, preach what the flesh wants to hear.

2:17 - ¹⁷These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever.

Seductive false teachers are like wells without water: they appear deep, but they produce nothing of value to a thirsty soul. They delude men, but those deluded men walk away still thirsty. Because only Christ can quench that thirst.

And clouds carried with a tempest: like a hurricane or typhoon, they bring ruin and destruction into the lives of the people they affect. They have power, but it is destructive power.

"To whom the midst of darkness is reserved for ever": They ruin other people even as their own ruin and judgment comes in God's time, and it definitely will come.

2:18 - ¹⁸For when they speak great swelling *words* of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, *through much wantonness*, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error.

Great swelling words of vanity: eloquent, but void of truth, empty. They attract people with bait, appealing to the lusts of the flesh.

2:19 - ¹⁹While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.

That is the lie Satan tempted Eve with: you can be as gods without God. That is at the core of the Gnostic doctrine (as we'll see when we study Jude) and the New Age movement of today. They promise liberty (freedom), but are themselves the servants of corruption:

3. An exposure of their converts (2:20-22)

2:20 - ²⁰For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.

These apostates have a head knowledge of Christ. They know the truth, they were taught it, but they rejected it and have not received Him. They tasted the heavenly gift, but didn't swallow it by faith. They are those spoken of in Matthew 7:21-23. The latter end is truly worse than the beginning.

2:21 - ²¹For 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 have been better for them to not have known the plan of salvation than to have known it and turned away; better never born than never born again. A preacher often concluded his sermons with:

"Friends, if you came in here today unsaved and you walk out of here unsaved, I am the worst enemy that you have ever had, because you have heard the gospel and now you can never go into the presence of God and say to Him that you have never heard the gospel. You have heard it, and it will be worse for you when God pronounces judgment than for any heathen in the darkest part of the earth today." - Dr. A.C. Gaebelien

2:22 - ²²But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

Peter quotes Proverbs 26:11. By their actions, they reveal that they are not new creatures in Christ, but the same old pigs they always were. How do they reveal their true nature? Their fruits eventually give them away.

Matthew 7:1,2 - Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

III. Faith's Consummation (Chapter 3)

A. Peter exposes the scoffers (3:1-13)

1. Their insistent denial of the Lord's return (3:1-4)

3:1,2 - ¹This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in *both* which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: ²That 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 now focuses on a subject that was on every Christian's lips at that time: the return of Christ. Paul wrote frequently of the return of Christ and called it "that blessed hope".

Titus 2:13 - Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Peter was particularly concerned because the truth of Christ's return was being denied by some. Peter already wrote a letter to these same people (whether it was the 1 Peter of the Bible isn't certain). He is about to remind them of truths they already know. He wanted to refer them back to what the Old Testament prophets and the New Testament apostles had already written.

3:3 - ³Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,

The word scoffers means "mockers". They walk after their own lusts, meaning they are motivated by their own carnal desires. These "scoffers" deny the second coming of Christ (verse 4), and they choose not to believe, two things: the Creation (verse 5), and the Flood of Noah (verse 6).

3:4 - ⁴And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of the creation.

Peter exposes their reasoning: "Where is the promise of His coming?" Today, those who believe in a literal 2nd coming of Christ and "rapture" of the saints are considered to be "crazy".

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2. Their ignorant denial of the Lord's return (3:5-13)

3:5-7 - ⁵For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old , and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: ⁶Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: ⁷But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

They are willingly ignorant and simply refuse to believe in the power of God's Word both to create and to destroy. It is "willing" ignorance: they are choosing to not believe in creation and the Flood, as they scoff at the return of Christ.

The agenda of God for the world is in three parts: past, the world that was (pre-Flood); present; and future. The past world "perished" in the Flood. The present world will be destroyed with fire and then God will create a new heaven and a new earth (Rev. 21).

3:8 - ⁸But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

This verse does not say that one day with the Lord IS a thousand years, but AS a thousand years. It is a figure of speech called a simile that compares two things using the word "like" or "as".

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John Phillips wrote, "God's time frame is much different than ours. We can experience time only a moment at a time, but God gathers all of time; past, present, and future into an eternal present tense. He is not locked into a time sequence as we are, thus He can experience a thousand years as though it were one day."

3:9 - ⁹The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

God's longsuffering and desire is mentioned: that all should come to repentance:

Romans 2:4 - Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

I Timothy 2:4 - Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

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One commentator (Phillips) wrote:

"The word used here, "slack" tells us that God is not delaying. He is not late, He is longsuffering. God nurses a hatred of sin in His heart beyond our wildest comprehension. Yet, He stands alongside the murderer as he does his victim and does nothing. He listens to the vilest obscenity and does nothing. He sees the little children being corrupted, body and soul, by the vilest character and does nothing. All He has to do is utter a word or think a thought and such people would never provoke Him again. But He does nothing. There must be a reason of extraordinary force and significance that stays His hand. There is. He is willing that none should perish.

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The only hope of the salvation of any soul rests in the patience, long-suffering, and self-control of God. He was patient with all of us. Surely the strength of His restraint indicates the dreadful doom from which God would save even those who provoke Him. Nothing but matchless grace moves God to give even the vilest sinners time to repent. The fact that God allows outrages to continue must surely mean that He sees ahead for many a future of inconceivable horror. Rather than plunge the offenders into it at once, He allows them to continue. Their atrocities, terrible as they are, cannot be compared with the torments that await those who commit them.

Out of pity for even such as they, God waits. That ought not to surprise us. If He held His hand at Calvary, it is no wonder He has continued to hold it these past two days of His time. God's holiness and justice demand judgment. The Lord is moving toward it. Hell is inevitable, but God has no wish to send men there. Thus the judgment deferred spells "salvation". It exhibits grace poured out day after day, year after year, century after century. The great amnesty, however, will not last forever."

3:10 - ¹⁰But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

The Day of the Lord is a reference to end-time events starting with the rapture. His coming is as a thief in the night. The rapture will be sudden, taking everyone by surprise. That will start the 7-year tribulation period followed by the second coming of Jesus Christ at the Battle of Armageddon and who then will establish his 1,000 year millennial reign. There will be one more battle after the 1,000 years and Peter writes about what will happen.

He says the heavens shall pass away by a great noise and fire. His description sounds like nuclear explosions with the elements melting with fervent heat. Revelation 21:1 only says, "for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away". The OT has others that describe a melting of the earth (Psalm 46:6, Psalm 97:5, Amos 9:5) and that the earth is burned (Nahum 1:5).

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John Phillips wrote: This remarkable prophecy includes a number of fascinating words. Take, for instance, the word translated "elements." ... In today's English, it would simply be expressed by the word *atoms*. The word translated "dissolved" is the Greek word *lud*, which means "to break up," "destroy," or "melt." The Holy Spirit is saying here that, at the end of the age, a great fire of the heavens and the earth will occur. He employs language of the most precise kind. He says that the elemental particles of matter, which we now call atoms, will be dissolved, untied, released. Their energies, hitherto imprisoned, will be set free. Peter, of course, could not possibly have realized the technical accuracy of his terms, but the Holy Spirit did. The principle of nuclear fission, which is the basis of the atomic bomb, is clearly implied in Peter's words. So then Peter described accurately the untying of the atom and the resulting rushing, fiery destruction that follows it (and melting of the earth). He did not envision the holocaust as overtaking the world at the end of the church age. Rather, he placed the event at the very end of the entire calendar of prophetic events—at the end of the millennial age. The fact that the atomic age has dawned, however, is another sign heralding the approaching end times."

3:11,12 - ¹¹Seeing then *that* all these things shall be dissolved (same word as melt in verse 10), what manner of *persons* ought ye to be in *all* holy conversation and godliness, ¹²Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

Jesus' second coming is a motivation: to holy living and godliness, looking ahead to His coming. Peter mentions again the dissolution of the heavens and earth by fire, after which God will bring new heavens and a new earth.

3:13 - ¹³Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

This world is not our home, and so we need to hold loosely to the things of this world, with our focus on the world to come. Do not get attached to this world, but be willing to sacrifice for Christ and that city that He has prepared.

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Hebrews 11:13,14,16 - These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of *them*, and embraced *them*, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. But now they desire a better *country*, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

Notice how their desire for that heavenly country endeared them to God, "wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God". Their focus on heaven pleased God.

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B. Peter exhorts the saints (3:14-18)

3:14 - ¹⁴Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

With the future judgment seat of Christ and the new heaven and new earth in mind, we are to be diligent to be found by Christ to be blameless in His sight. "Blameless" implies we need to be faithful doing what we were instructed to do (including the Great Commission).

3:15,16 - ¹⁵And account *that* the longsuffering of our Lord *is* salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; ¹⁶As also in all *his* epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as *they do* also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

Paul's epistles do contain some things that are hard to understand! It does not mean we ignore them. Some say that Paul's writings were not necessarily the Word of God, especially the parts of women not teaching or usurping authority over men, but Peter clearly states that Paul's writings are scriptures. Some do not understand Paul's writings and end up believing the wrong thing: to their destruction.

3:17,18 - ¹⁷Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know *these things* before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness. ¹⁸But grow in grace, and *in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.*

Peter has two final words. First, "Beware!" Don't fall for the false teachings. When someone comes along with some fanciful "interpretation" of Scripture and seeks to draw us off into his little corner, Peter says simply, "Beware!" We know they're coming.

Growing in grace and in knowing Christ will keep us from being tripped up by false teaching. And so his final word is "Grow!" He warns us to not fall away from the truth, but instead to grow in grace and the **knowledge of Christ**.

Get to know Christ! That is the ultimate pursuit of life. From the moment we are saved until we either are raptured or die, we need to pursue a lifelong quest to know Him and to surrender to Him, to be conformed to His image. Allow me to quote Paul one more time:

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Philippians 3:10 - That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

Peter ends with a final praise of God, "To Him (Christ) be glory both now and forever, Amen."

I'll finish with John Phillips:

"Peter put down his pen. That's the last we hear of him in Scripture. One day a knock came at his door. Nero's attention had been drawn to him finally. He was arrested and sentenced to death by crucifixion. Once his body died, Peter was absent from the body and present with the Lord."

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And so ends the second epistle of Peter....

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