

Welcome to: - Bible House of Grace.



God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.

2 Peter 3.

(2013)

The Bible not only reveals God's eternal plans purposes and promises

But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

Teach it, don't demand it.

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2 Peter 3.

INTRODUCTION: Peter probably wrote this letter from a Roman prison about A.D. 67–68, shortly before his death. Twisted versions of Christian truth were being taught, which Peter describes in vivid terms in chapter 2. He recalls his firsthand experience of Christ's glory at the Transfiguration (1:17-18). He explains the more sure truth of the Gospel which he likens to a lamp shining in a dark place (1:19) and an antidote to heresy. In chapter 3 he focuses on those who scoff at the idea of Christ's triumphant return and the final judgment and states that as God once destroyed the earth with water, he will one day judge it again with fire. In the light of this truth Peter warns those in Christ that they should live in a manner that honours God and brings a good testimony to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ as they patiently wait for his glorious return and the salvation he has promised to all believers.

Topics.

- Where is the promise of his coming?
- The heavens and earth existed long ago and were formed by the word of God.
- All things are controlled by the word of God.
- One day with the Lord is as a thousand years.
- The heavens will be burned and works on earth exposed.
- What sort of lives should the beloved live.
- New heavens and a new earth and the second death.
- Beloved, take care you do not lose your own stability.

The Previous Chapter: in the previous chapter Peter spoke of false teachers introducing destructive heresies; of God casting angels into hell when they sinned; of angels being kept in chains of gloomy darkness and of the world of Noah, Sodom and Gomorrah being destroyed. He talked of the Lord rescuing the godly from trials; of blaspheming the glorious ones and of indulging in the lust of defiling passion. Peter warned of despising governments; of angels who would not bring a railing accusation against authorities; of blots and blemishes in God's Kingdom and of a dog returning to its own vomit and a pig that returns to the mud.

NOTE: for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

Predictions of the Old Testament Prophets.

2 Peter 3:1-2 ----- ¹This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, ²that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles,

In the previous chapter Peter was concerned that certain mockers and scoffers would cast doubt on his testimony that he, James and John saw Christ's glory and majesty on the mountain of transfiguration so he shone a spotlight on the truth that there is an even greater proof of Christ's majesty and glory than their testimony and that proof is the prophetic word (2 Peter 1:16-21). This more sure proof of prophecy refers to the numerous majestic prophecies contained in the Old Testament regarding Christ and his Kingdom. This is why he is now encouraging his readers to remember the predictions of the holy prophets (v2) because these

Old Testament prophecies give an even stronger proof of Christ glory and majesty than their testimony. This is because they were written over hundreds of years by different prophets from different periods of history and different countries and all were spoken long before Christ appeared which means there could be no collusion between the different prophets and writers yet, not only is there one beautiful theme focused on Christ that flows from Genesis through to revelations, but many have come to pass in stunning detail and many are still to come to pass in glorious wonder and breath-taking awe.

Fulfilled prophecy is not only proof that the Christian faith is not built on cleverly devised myths, but is also proof of inspiration because the Old Testament contains Scriptural predictions of future events that were uttered long before the events transpired that no mere human wisdom, intelligence or foresight could have anticipated especially in such minute and specific detail as the prophets proclaimed and psalmist sang.

No mortal man no matter how brilliant or clairvoyant could without the inspiration of God possibly predict, guess or anticipate the hundreds of predictions concerning Israel, the land of Canaan, Babylon, Assyria, Egypt, and numerous other prophecies that have been fulfilled throughout history, especially those prophecies which were fulfilled by men who struggled with frantic desperation to avoid their fulfilment and by others who utterly disbelieved in God. It is certain, therefore, that no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:21).

For those who understand the wonder, beauty and glory of
Bible prophecy there is no-doubt that Scripture is the
Revelation of the mind and will of God.

Commandments of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus said: -

- You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind and strength and 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these (Mark 12:30-31).

Paul said the whole law is fulfilled in the words: -

- You shall love your neighbour as yourself (Gal. 5:14).

James wrote: -

- If you really fulfil the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself," you are doing well (James 2:8).

The command, "Love your neighbour as yourself," means do not deliberately do harm to other humans. No sane person deliberately does things to inflict pain on themselves, loving others as you love yourself is not about feeling some warm and fuzzy emotion towards others, it is about not hurting others as you would not hurt yourself.

The thing God hates the most is when we do harm to another person, physically, financially, sexually, verbally, mentally, emotionally or spiritually and the thing God loves the most is when we do-good to others. It is interesting to notice that the major crime that God points out in Noah's time and one of the main reasons for the flood was because of all the violence in the land.

Jesus famous Sermon on the Mount: the constant theme throughout Jesus famous Sermon on the Mount is doing what is right before God by seeking the way of peace in all situations. Jesus in this sermon calls Christians to treat people fairly and with respect, dignity, decency grace compassion, kindness, mercy and to be quick to forgive. Biblically a wicked person is primarily one who deliberately and consciously denies the existence of God and does harm to other humans, in contrast to this a good person is one who worships God and the Lord Jesus Christ and do all they can, to do what is right, and what is just (i.e., fair for all).

To love in the biblical sense is not an emotional attitude, but the keeping of these laws in relation to our neighbour. This is the general law of justice, beyond that; our conduct is to be regulated by relationship. We must render honour and justice to all people wherever due, but we have a particular responsibility to care for our families and those who belong to Christ.

For further information on Jesus Famous Sermon see: -

- Matthew 5 in Commentary New Testament (ON WEBSITE MENU).

Where is the Promise of his Coming?

2 Peter 3:3-4 ----- ³knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires.⁴They will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation."

Peter warns that there will be scoffers in the last days, who mock at the return of Christ the majestic hope of the Christian faith this is another reason Peter said, "Remember the prophecies of the holy prophets" (v2). The prophets of the Old Testament prophesied of the Messiah the Christ returning to establish God's Kingdom on earth and the apostles proclaimed Jesus would return in glory to gather his elect to himself.

Jesus said: -

- I go and prepare a place for you, *I will come again* and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also (John 14:3).

The angels, at Jesus ascension, said: -

- Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, *will come* in the same way as you saw him go into heaven (Acts 1:11)

Throughout Scripture it is clear that in all ages those who denied the promises regarding Christ have always mocked and persecuted those who believed. Peter is highlighting the fact that these scoffers will increase in number as we draw nearer to Christ's return. The words: -

- Where is the promise of his coming?

Can carry the following two thoughts: -

1. Where is the fulfilment of the promise that Christ will return?
2. Where are the indications or signs that Christ will return?

The scoffers at this time were implying that: -

- The promise had utterly failed.
- There was not the slightest evidence that the promise would be accomplished.
- Those who had believed this promise were entirely deluded.

The object of their scorn, derision, contempt and sneering is, "What has become of the promise of Christ coming, where is the accomplishment of it?" They reason that the laws of nature are uniform, as they always have been, and the promise had failed. They believed in the stability of our planet and were convinced that the world would continue as it always has. Their mindset is on mankind saving the world and not any intervention of God. As they looked around and saw that from the foundation of the world all things continue as they always have. This of course is true, but what they don't consider is that God can flick His fingers and sudden destruction is upon us as in the days of Noah and in the days of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Consider for a moment: the majesty and glory of the Bible is the awe-inspiring wonder that it is written in such a manner that every generation has been able to live with the hope of the Lord's appearing when he returns in glory. From God's perspective every human has been given a limited amount of time to live therefore it really does not matter whether Christ returns in one year or ten thousand years because every human only has one life-span and if they, by faith in Christ and God's grace are in the eternal Kingdom of God then it is guaranteed that sometime within that life-span, (howbeit for most through the eternal doors of death) they will be with the Lord clothed in an immortal body and dwelling in everlasting glory.

The longest any of us are ever going to have to wait for the Lord is not thousands of years, but one lifespan and at the end of only one lifespan we are with Lord in eternal glory. When a mortal human lifespan is measured against eternity the time we spend in this world is, but a blink of the eye.

The Heavens and Earth Existed Long Ago and Formed by the Word of God.

2 Peter 3:5-7 ----- ⁵For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, ⁶and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. ⁷But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.

Those who scoff and mock the return of Christ saying all things continue as they always have, overlook that fact that the earth was once destroyed in a matter of forty-days, the rain didn't start with a few drops over a few days and slowly increase over a few weeks, rather it was instant deluge, the only warning the people had was that of Noah and his family proclaiming for one-hundred and twenty years that destruction was coming. These mockers choose to overlook this fact and rather choose to trust in the laws of nature claiming they have always remained the same and that they always will. Peter reminds us that though the laws of nature at this present time do remain as they have, it is God who implemented and who controls these laws. If God rises up in judgment and intervenes in our history as he did in the days of Noah not one of the laws of nature will have any power to resist the will of God, but rather will do exactly as he commands since it was God who established them.

All things are controlled by the Word of God.

The following verses show that that it is God who controls the laws of nature and therefore to trust in these laws for our security is foolishness.

- God said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters" (Gen. 1:6).
- God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so (Gen. 1:9).
- Let all the earth fear the LORD let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him! For God spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm" (Psalm 33:8-9).

The idea here is that everything depends on God's word and on God's will. As the heavens and the earth were originally made by his command, so by the same command they can be destroyed. Peter is shining a brilliant floodlight on the truth that the heavens (the sky, sun, moon, and stars) the earth and the flood were formed by the word of God and by this same word the heavens and the earth are being kept for judgement (v6-7).

One Day with the Lord is as a Thousand Years.

2 Peter 3:8 ----- ⁸But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

The expression "One day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" is common in Jewish writings.

Moses wrote: -

- For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past (Psalm 90:4).

Here Moses is saying eternity knows no distinction between a thousand years and a day. Peter in his reply to the scoffers who sneeringly mock those who believe Jesus will return in glory applies this principal to the last day, to show the scoffers that God's essence and eternity exceed all measure of time and because of this an interval of time with the Lord cannot be measured by the idea of long or short because eternity exceeds all measures of time it cannot be measure by our concept of time. For us there is a vast difference between "One day and a thousand years" yet, in the account of God, there is no difference all things past, present, and future, are ever before him.

If people have no knowledge or belief of the eternal God, they will naturally think of God in the same way as they think of themselves. We have but a very short time to live, and if we do not accomplish our dreams and goals in this very brief period of time we never will. But this clearly is not so with God since God always lives and therefore we cannot think of God as we think of ourselves, nor can the scoffers claim that the execution of God's eternal purposes are abandoned and Christ's return is a false promises simply because it seems to them to be a long time coming.

The mockers argument was that much time had passed away, and still all things remain as they always have. Peter is basically saying to the scoffers, their argument means little in the face of eternity since what may seem to be a long time to us is a brief period with God. In the infinity of God's own existence there is abundant time to accomplish his eternal plans and purposes. Those who believe God's promise should never think of time when thinking of God who always lives since our concept of time in this mortal body and temporary world has no-existence in God or in eternity. Neither should those who deny God and act corruptly think they will escape judgment simply because it is delayed.

Peter in these verses is highlighting the concept of eternal time (howbeit eternal time cannot exist), but the idea is to give our mortal mind bound to time as we know it a concept of eternity. Peter is saying for those who are resurrected to eternal life one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years is as one day. This is an interesting formula since the two statements cancels each other out, which means the idea behind what Peter is saying is that in eternity time does not exist.

Peter is responding to the mockers and scoffers who are judging time by their mortal life span and as they understand time to be with their mortal finite human mind, but compared to eternity time as we understand it to be is like a single grain of sand on a beach or as Peter so aptly states, "One day is as a thousand years and a thousand years is as one day."

Peter in these verses is shining a spotlight on the fact that those who scoffingly say "All things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation" (v4) have a very small perspective of eternity and eternal life or don't understand it at all. To the Lord time on earth is but nothing when compared to eternal life especially when you consider that each of us only has a maximum of one hundred years (give or take a few) of life on earth in contrast to God who is forever existing.

The Lord is Patient Desiring that all would Reach Repentance.

2 Peter 3-9 ----- ⁹The Lord is not slow to fulfil his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

A thousand years are as one day to the eternal Lord therefore he is longsuffering in delaying the Day of Judgment giving mankind a space of time for repentance. This present age we live in is called the age of grace this is not simply because we are saved by grace but also because it is by God's grace that the Lord is patiently delaying judgment and the day of wrath upon the wickedness of earth-dwellers. The Lord does not desire that mankind would perish, but that all should reach repentance.

This is one of the reasons God through much long suffering is withholding judgment since it will come unexpectedly, suddenly and with fury as it did in the days of Noah and the days of Sodom and Gomorrah.

To have a heart like God is to have a heart that is patient toward those in Christ and a desire that those outside of Christ will come to repentance.

The Day of the Lord will come Like a Thief.

2 Peter 3:10-12 ----- ¹⁰But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. ¹¹Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, ¹²waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn!

Peter states: -

- The day of the Lord will come like a thief (v10).

Paul wrote: -

- The day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night (1 Thess. 5:2).

Luke says: -

- They were eating and drinking and marrying and being given in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all (Luke 17:27).

Putting these together we see that the day of the Lord will come unexpectedly, suddenly and in the night. The words "In the night" shows that the householders were sleeping when the thief came which carries the idea the day of the Lord will come when the world is in spiritual darkness as it was in the days of Noah, when there was little faith in the earth.

It is certain it will be a time when the foolish virgins are slumbering and sleeping and when the claims of scoffers and mockers that the Lord's return is a clever myth and fable invented by the mind of men is greatly multiplying amongst the populations of the world.

Children of Light and Children of Darkness.

The following comforting words Paul wrote to the Thessalonian brothers and sisters show that the day of the Lord should not overtake those in Christ as a thief in the night.

- You yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them as labour pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape, but you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness (1 Thess. 5:2-5).

Just as Noah and his family and Lot and his family were delivered from certain destruction these verses show us that the faithful who are watching and waiting with heartfelt excitement for the Lord's return will not be taken by surprise when that glorious, breathtaking and majestic day comes.

Treasures of a Household.

But there is a majestic and glorious wonder contained in the words, "The day of the Lord will come like a thief (v10) that is sometimes overlooked. Consider for a moment, what does a thief come to steal? But the most valuable treasure hidden in the house he has entered to plunder. If Christ is coming as a thief, what are the treasures of the world that he is coming to plunder, but all those who by faith and God's grace belong to his eternal Kingdom (God's treasure in this world).

The Heavens will be Burned and Works on Earth Exposed.

Amongst religious teachers there have always been various understandings of what Peter had in mind when he wrote the words, "The heavens will pass away, the heavenly bodies will be burned up and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed" (v10) The following are the two most common teachings

1. The sky, stars, sun, moon, the earth and everything upon it will be totally destroyed.
2. The term heavens symbolised those who hold high religious positions of authority and who have great influence over a multitude of people, while the earth symbolises the secular world; based on this idea the heavens passing away would refer to the ruin of the city of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Jewish Temple.

The heavenly bodies being burned up would refer to the total removal of the Levitical priesthood and the Jewish religious system with all its ceremonial rites, religious customs and traditions and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed would refer not only to the corruptions of the people within the city of Jerusalem but also of those in the land of Judah and the surrounding nations.

It is certainly true that these events did occur. In 70 A.D. the armies of Rome brought ruin to city of Jerusalem, destruction to the temple and to the land of Judea in the same manner as Moses at the foot of Mount Sinai had told the people of Israel that their land would be: -

- Burned with brimstone and salt, nothing sown and nothing growing, where no plant can sprout, an overthrow like that of Sodom and Gomorrah which the LORD overthrew in his anger and wrath (Deut. 29:23-29)

If they abandoned the Covenant they entered into with the LORD and turned to other gods and gross wickedness, which they had done. Though history records Rome's destruction of Jerusalem, the temple and the land of Judah, the ultimate sense of Peter's words are focused on the return of the Lord Jesus Christ and the effect that glorious and majestic event will have on the global world. So for this reason God's judgment on Israel and Jerusalem should be seen as a prelude of similar events that will affect the entire world and not simply Israel and its surrounding nations.

With this global view in mind the following would apply: -

- The heavens passing away would not only refer to the ruin of all false religious temples (i.e., the Vatican City, Moslem Mosques and other similar religious buildings) but also carry the idea that all that is destructive in nature (i.e., storms, floods, earthquakes and such like things) would also pass away.
- The heavenly bodies being burned up would not only refer to the total removal of the world's false religious teachers and leaders, but also to all man-made ceremonial rites, religious customs and traditions being made obsolete.
- The earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed, means that everything corrupt in the world would be exposed such as deceitful governments, corrupt leaders of nations, the oppression of the banking system, the stock exchange and global trading. The rich taking advantage of the poor for their own selfish gain for that sake of profit, the wickedness of war, all that is corrupt in our justice system and self-serving religious leaders will be clearly exposed.

There will be a far more suitable climate when Christ returns in glory as King of kings and Lord of lords to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth. It is certain there will be no earthquakes, storms, tornadoes; tidal waves or extremes in hot and cold temperatures which means that the climate as we know it has to change and for this to happen the heavenly bodies will need to change also.

NOTE: to discuss the Lord's return in an atmosphere of spiritual adventure and peace can be enormously exciting and is spiritually healthy, but to dogmatically and aggressively argue over the exact detail and every aspect of Christ's return results in spiritual sickness because it causes strife, contention and worse still division. Though it is exciting to have a reasonable understanding (howbeit limited) of Christ's return and it does add strength to our faith, it is not important to know or understand every detail of the Lord's return to be saved to eternal life.

It is interesting to notice that after the resurrection of Christ most New Testament Bible writers simply say that we will be gathered together to be with Christ in eternal glory. Every faithful brother and sister in Christ who looks forward to the Lord's return with excitement can be confident Christ will receive them with joy.

The following comforting words of Jesus should always be kept in mind: -

- He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out (John 10:3).
- He goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice (John 10:4).
- The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep (John 10:11).
- I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me (John 10:14).
- My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me (John 10:27).

No brother or sister will miss the Lord's trumpet call simply because they lack full understanding of their Saviour's return. Clearly it will be a very dramatic and awe inspiring event and as the events draw nearer it will become very clear to those who know the Lord Jesus Christ. It should be comforting to all faithful Christians that though Noah and Lot knew destruction was coming neither of them knew the exact moment when it would come.

Providing we are always ready, meaning always remaining in faith trusting in God's grace and endeavour to live faithfully before the Lord Jesus Christ with an excitement of his return we can be confident we will be gathered together (whether we are dead or alive) to be with the Lord in everlasting glory.

What sort of lives should the beloved live: seeing that it is an undoubted truth that the heavens and the earth are going to be dramatically changed when the Lord returns Peter tells the beloved in the Lord that they should endeavour to live, speak and behave in a manner that honours God and brings a good testimony to the Lord Jesus Christ and the Christian faith (v11) with a sense that nothing is permanent on the earth and an awareness that our citizenship is not of this world.

A New Heavens and a New Earth.

2 Peter 3:13-14 ----- ¹³But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. ¹⁴Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace.

The allusion here seems to be to the following words of Isaiah: -

- For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy, no more shall the sound of weeping and the cry of distress shall be heard in it. They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labour in vain or bear children for calamity, for they shall be the offspring of the blessed of the LORD. The wolf and the lamb shall graze together; the lion shall eat straw like the ox, they shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain, says the LORD (Isaiah 65:17-25).
- For as the new heavens and the new earth that I make shall remain before me, says the LORD, so shall your offspring and your name remain, from new moon to new moon, and from Sabbath to Sabbath, all flesh shall come to worship before me, declares the LORD (Isaiah 66:22-23).

Some teach that these verses of Isaiah refer to the glory of this present Gospel age that we live in, but this idea leaves much lacking, added to this is the fact that Peter is referring to them means that they must have a far more extended meaning. In this present world we live by faith looking for an entire new state of things as Abraham did when God called him out of the world that he was familiar with and went out, not knowing where he was going, but by faith went to live in the land of promise, looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God (Heb. 11:8-10).

The present state and order of things as we know them will be dramatically changed, but not to be blotted out, but renewed, purified, refined and purged from all moral and natural imperfection and made better for the home of the redeemed who are raised out of the ashes of the old. After the earth has given-birth to the sons and daughters of God in the resurrection the earth will be renovated and restored to the paradise condition it was created with in the Garden of Eden and suited for the home of us all.

As the flood was the baptism of the earth bringing about a partial renovation of the earth and Noah's world, likewise the fire of God's judgment and the return of Christ will bring about a change in creation, the sun, moon, stars, the climate and nature will all be altered to bring about paradise conditions on earth. Our world's governments, trading and our banking systems as we know them will all be changed to systems that will be fair and just for all.

Clearly when these changes come about it will be perfectly proper and right to refer to the earth and the heavens as a New Earth and New Heavens especially when Christ is ruling as King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11-16) from God's Holy City Jerusalem (on Mount Zion God's Holy Mountain) to establish God's Kingdom on earth during this New Age. The dead in Christ and the faithful, who are alive, will be gathered together to rule and reign as kings and priests with the Lord over those nations who are left outside the Holy city of God. Christ the King united with his people will not only bring peace to the Middle East, but establish God's Kingdom of steadfast love, faithfulness, righteousness, Joy and peace throughout the world and the glory of God will cover the earth.

Jesus will do justice to the poor and the oppressed he will be a faithful and compassionate King forever. He will not allow anyone to strike terror in the earth, or use lies and deception to enlarge their own wealth and power. The land will abundantly produce and even the deserts will flourish. The animals will not feed on each other and even the lamb will be able to lie down with the wolf and everyone will eat of their own hands because all that they plant will produce. All nations the LORD has made will come and worship before the Lord Jesus Christ. They will glorify God's Name, proclaiming the LORD is great and does wondrous things and that He alone is God.

The book of Revelation states: -

- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that: -

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

But this is not the End of God's Eternal Plan.

John wrote: -

- Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the *second death* has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years (Rev. 20:6).

The first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-5) refers to the millennial reign of Christ. As glorious as this New Age will be for those who are gathered together with Christ this is not the end of God's eternal plan that He purposed before time began, but it is the last age before God's eternal plan for ETERNITY begins in all its majestic and royal fullness.

The Second Death: refers to the climatic events at the end of Christ millennial reign when God descends on a Great White Throne from heaven and the sea, Hades and death give up the dead and they all stand before God.

John on the Isle of Patmos wrote: -

- When the thousand years are ended (Rev. 20:7) he saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it and the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done and the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire and if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:11-15)

The Lake of Fire: is a symbol of eternal death (i.e., total extinction).

When these events take place God's plan for eternity is complete and God is ALL in ALL. Though the Old Testament gives much detail regarding Christ's millennial reign on earth there is very little detail as to what form eternity will finally take or look like after this final judgment of the second death and when God is ALL in ALL. Though John in the following visions does give us some small glimpse of what eternity will look like at the end of Christ's millennial reign (Revelation 20:7).

- Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more and I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away (Rev. 21:1-4).
- I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb and the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. They will bring into it the glory and the honour of the nations, but nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life (Rev. 21:22-27).

For further information see the title: -

- The Second or Great White Throne Judgment.
- In Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

Count the Patience of the Lord as Salvation.

2 Peter 3:15-16 ----- ¹⁵And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, ¹⁶as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures.

NOTE: by the time Peter was writing this letter Paul's writings were already accepted as a part of the Scriptures.

Certain religious leaders have used Peter's words: -

- There are some things in Paul's writings that are hard to understand (v16).

To control their followers telling them that the Scriptures are not to be read by the common people because things in it are hard to be understood. Therefore they must have theologians, priests and ministers to teach them the Bible because no layperson can understand its wonders and glorious truths. But if this was a true statement why do we have so many different interpretations amongst Christian communities who are taught by those who have certificates from Bible Colleges, theological degrees in religion and accredited with high positions of religious authority because of their exalted knowledge. Clearly religious certificates, Bible colleges and standing behind a pulpit are no guarantee of correct Scriptural knowledge or teaching.

Peter unlike the religious leaders who have used his words to control their followers is not saying that the common people, the lay person and those seeking God should not read the Bible themselves, but is warning them that there are some ignorant and unstable people who twist and distort many Scriptures. Following, are the four most common thoughts regarding Peter's statement there are some things in Paul's letters that are hard to understand (v16).

1. There is no-doubt Peter was keenly aware of all that Paul had written and mindful that they contained some very difficult passages for the Jews to understand especially regarding salvation by grace and not by the Levitical priesthood and Moses laws of purifications, ceremonial rites and Jewish religious customs and traditions (religious works) which they had held fast to for over four-thousand years.
2. To understand what Peter had in mind it helps to consider that his focus in this letter has been on the resurrection of Christ, the Day of Judgment and eternal glory, the same things Paul in his writings speaks of (1 Cor. 15:44) (1 Thess. 4:15). No-one would deny that these topics are clearly difficult for our mortal and finite minds to comprehend especially the resurrection of dead and decayed bodies being raised to eternal glory and the concept of eternity thus the words, "There are some things in Paul's writings that are hard to understand" (v16) are better understood to mean that they are difficult for our mortal minds to comprehend or perceive.
3. It is only difficult for those with a wrong heart attitude to understand (i.e., the scoffers and mockers Peter refers to). Literally hundreds of thousands throughout history have understood the Scriptures to such a depth that they were willing to lay their lives down for the great treasure they found veiled in the Old Testament and clearly revealed by the New Testament.
4. Paul (as do all apostles) calls us to suffer hardships, trials and persecutions for the name of Christ.

No brother or sister in Christ should ever think that these words of Peter can be used as an excuse for not reading the Bible since God has given us more than enough throughout the New Testament that is easy to understand for anyone who is seeking God and searching for eternal life and that is plain for anyone to find to find God's love and his grace in the Lord Jesus Christ. Added to this all letters of the apostles provide sufficient, simple and very clear instructions for perfecting every man and woman of God and living a lifestyle that honours God.

The riches, wealth and treasure of apostles are only obscurity to those who go to them in pride and seek out their truths for their own selfish ambition and gain. The real difficulty in understanding lies only in the heart of those who make the complaint. There is absolutely no-doubt that the veil over the mind will be removed when a person searches out the writings of Christ and the apostles with an honest and humble heart and that the glory contained within them will be revealed in such power that it changes that person's life.

An open, humble and honest heart combined with a willingness to receive God's word is one of the best qualifications for understanding the writings of Paul (and all other Bible writers). When these qualifications exist within the heart, no-one will fail to find the Good News of the Gospel that leads to eternal life and everlasting glory.

Twisting and Distorting the Scriptures.

Peter with the words, "The ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures" (v16) is a warning to those seeking God to be aware that there are false teachers who are ignorant and unstable men who have no understanding of the heart of God and the Bible and its prophecies, wonders and spiritual glories of the Spirit of Christ who twist and distort the Scriptures for their own gain, advantage, purposes. Though such men may have success in this world they are bringing about their own eternal destruction.

NOTE: most false teaching is a result of isolating verses and lifting them out of the context they are in and uniting them to other verses lifted out of their context and creating an entirely new teaching which sounds biblical because the teaching is founded on Scripture, but it is Scriptures lifted out of their original context. This is why Peter calls them twisted and distorted Scriptures.

Beloved, Take Care you do Not Lose your Own Stability.

2 Peter 3:17-18 ----- ¹⁷You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability. ¹⁸But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

NOTICE: How Peter starts and ends his letter by referring to those in Christ as the beloved (v1, 17). Paul has that same kind of spirit toward those in Christ. Peter and Paul though men of great courage and strength are not afraid to show their emotions or affections and express them to their brothers and sisters in Christ.

Peter's encouragement to Grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord and Jesus Christ shines a spotlight on the following two truths: -

1. Salvation only begins at water baptism it is the starting point of spiritual growth in the family of Christ and God's Kingdom. We all begin as spiritual infants and grow as any natural child does, by the example of our parents and through learning. Whether it is a natural child or a spiritual child no-one is born with all wisdom and all knowledge, but they are born into a family and their natural or spiritual growth will be largely dependent on the love, grace, kindness and caring flowing in that family.
2. The knowledge we are to grow in is knowledge in the Lord Jesus Christ which not only embraces the message of the cross and the Gospel, but also knowledge of what Christ spoke and taught and knowledge of his love kindness compassion and his forgiving spirit. This kind of knowledge is gained by observing Christ's life and how he treated others and then treating our brothers and sisters in Christ and those who do not know the love of God with the same love, compassion, mercy and forgiveness.

End.