

Born to Win

The Second Epistle of Peter

by Ronald L. Dart

This last week I was browsing through some news material and I came across an article by P.J. O'Rourke, writing in *The Weekly Standard*. He's a favorite of mine. He's a very thoughtful guy, but he's also humorous while he's at it—he doesn't take himself too seriously—and I thoroughly enjoyed this article. It's an interview, actually, with Senator Sununu—John E. Sununu. (He's the senator from New Hampshire. His dad [John H. Sununu] was a governor, at one time, and was a chief of staff of President George H.W. Bush.) But, anyway, here's a paragraph from that article I thought was interesting. He asked:

Does Senator Sununu find his principles compromised by the *American Idol* stagecraft of practical politics and its Paula Abdul logic?

P.J. O'Rourke - Mr. Sununu Goes to Washington

And I didn't follow that entirely because I've never watched *American Idol* and so I don't really know. But the Senator replied:

“Too many politicians,” the senator said, “fail to realize that voters are intelligent enough to understand that they can't agree with you about everything. What people want is someone who's thoughtful, direct, and able to explain. Reagan reveled in explaining. Was he 'too simplistic'? He was as deep and thoughtful as any of his contemporaries.”

P.J. O'Rourke - Mr. Sununu Goes to Washington

And I read that and the idea that people are smart enough to know they don't have to agree with you on everything...I thought that was good. And he said what people want is “someone who's thoughtful, direct, and able to explain.” Well, I'm not running for office, but this kind of sums up what I try my best to be, and I understand well enough what it means to say that Reagan reveled in explaining stuff. I mean, to me, explaining stuff is mother's milk. I just love it. I love teaching and I love doing Bible studies. I love speaking; love the radio program. It is so boring to just mouth platitudes and it's just as boring to read half-baked, off-the-wall doctrinal ideas which seem to sprout like weeds in Jesus' garden. And there's got to be a middle ground, somewhere, where we can all come together and we can hold different opinions—we can talk about stuff and still love each other as brothers and sisters.

Going through Jude last week made me more than a little aware of the constant state of heresy among Christian folk. I mean, I'm not exaggerating. It has been constant for 2,000 years and I don't see it going away. To be a heretic, you must hold forth an idea or a practice that leads to *division* in the community of faith. What I said was important enough that I'm going to repeat it. To be a heretic, you must hold forth an idea or a practice that leads to division in the community of faith. To merely *hold* a contrary opinion does not make you a heretic, contrary to some people's belief about the fact. I mean, we have all sorts of people who believe all sorts of things. There's *no way* that we could all agree on everything. At the CEM Feast of

Tabernacles, for example, we have a group of people who hold a wide variety of opinion, but we all have one thing in common—a desire to keep the feast and to worship God together. And beyond that, we have a desire to be together—to eat together, to play together, to laugh together, to have fellowship with one another. We have people there who want to press novel ideas on other people, occasionally, but the people who listen to them are, for the most part, merely being polite. You can see it on their face. You know, I spot these things from time to time. And I don't say anything; I just let them run their course. And I remember this one couple who had a axe to grind about some off-the-wall topic, and they talked to me for a little while until my eyes glazed over and I went somewhere else. And a little later I saw them talking to somebody else. And it was very evident, from the expression on the faces of the people that they were talking to: A) that they were making no progress whatsoever with these people and B) the the people were just being polite.

Now, churches have every right to publish a doctrinal statement. A doctrinal statement is: “this is what we teach.” It's what the word “doctrine” means—teaching. If you go beyond that, though, and publish a statement of belief... (Most cases where people say a “statement of belief” this is really a doctrinal statement.) But a statement of belief is problematic because they *imply* that you have to believe this to be a member in good standing. Whereas a doctrinal statement means you have to *teach* this if you're going to teach here. It doesn't mean you have to believe it. You can have variances on it and what have you. I think freedom of conscience is as important as any other freedom in a person's life. The ability to—not necessarily agree with what we're hearing from the pulpit—but to respectfully listen, hold a contrary opinion if we wish, but not to cause division in the church. That's perfectly all right. But a church has a right to keep itself free of heresy. Because, if they don't, they're going to confuse people, you're going to have people come in one door and go out the other, and the chance of being able to really do the things that churches exist to do is compromised.

Now, it's clear enough in reading the later New Testament epistles that heresy—not just a different opinion, *heresy*—was a common fact of life among the saints. Why? Well, maybe Peter's second letter can help us understand. Last week when we did Jude, it was suggested maybe doing the two of them together, because they do tend to relate to this theme. We didn't have time with Jude; it was big enough all by itself and 2nd Peter *certainly* is big enough all by itself. So, today, since we can't enter into a long book, we're going to go ahead with Peter's second epistle. So grab a cup of coffee, cookie, we'll be right back with 2nd Peter.

2 Peter 1

AKJV

¹ Simon 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 Savior Jesus Christ:

² Grace and peace be multiplied to you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

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

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

And I thought Paul wrote long sentences. This is—this whole thing all the way through verse four of chapter one—is one sentence. But this is standard writing in Greek. They didn't write with the punctuation that we do. In fact, most of the New Testament epistles have no punctuation *at all*. They just start talking, and when they get to a break, they break. Otherwise, they just keep on going. Well, having given us this flowery introduction, Peter continues with some instructions. In fact, what Peter gives us right here is precisely what we need to know about heresy. He continued (I think, in a way, we may even still be in this sentence):

2 Peter 1

AKJV

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

What a list that is of things we need to do. You know—diligence, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity. If you stop to think about that: if you really diligently apply these things in your life, I don't know where you get room for anything else. That's a home run. It's not instructions for the ministry, by the way. It's an instruction for *all the saints* and it outlines for us attitudes, duties, and actions—nine of them. I want to read it to you one more; this time from the New International Version.

2 Peter 1

NIV

- ⁵ For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge;
⁶ and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness;
⁷ and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love.
⁸ For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Boy, there's a lot in that. Notice how he said, "if you possess these qualities in *increasing* measure". These aren't things that you just come to, and now you've got it all, and you've got it in a little box, and you're can put a string around it and put it on a shelf and it's done. It doesn't work that way. And no one ever (in this lifetime, anyway) is ever going to really measure up on all of them. What he's saying is simply this: You need to be possessing these qualities in increasing measure. They need to be growing in you all the time. And if they do, they will keep you from being two things: ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. So, it's possible to be ineffective. It's possible to be unproductive. We don't want that. So what is it, exactly, we're supposed to do? I can read it to you again, but you've got it right there in front of you in your Bible. There's no point in beating it to death. I don't want to bore you with the stuff that didn't make this list, because there's a long list of them and I think you're smart enough to figure that out for yourself. There's just a *long* list of stuff that isn't helpful in making us effective and productive in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. Now, Peter pulls no punches. He, if anything, is more blunt than Paul. He says this:

2 Peter 1

AKJV

- ⁹ But he that lacks these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and has forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

Think about that. A person who lacks these things—how in the world is he ever going to come up with a new doctrine? How is he going to develop new truth? How is he going to take us into a greater knowledge of God? Can't do it. It's impossible. He's blind. And you know what Jesus said happens when the blind lead the blind [**Matthew 15:14, Luke 6:39**]. Peter continued in verse 10:

2 Peter 1

AKJV

- ¹⁰ Why the rather, brothers, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if you do these things, you shall never fall:

¹¹ For so an entrance shall be ministered to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Now, I believe in salvation by grace as much as anyone. I don't believe that we can save ourselves through our works. But we still have to take a look at what Peter is driving at here, because this is the second time he has come to us with this word, "diligence"—that we have to be diligent. So what happens to us if we're *not* diligent? Well, this passage implies that failure is a possibility, and it tells us what the goal is: entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And I'm afraid, from what I read here, it's possible to lose that. It's really kind of hard to think, when you read Peter, that all you have to do is give your hand to the preacher and your heart to the Lord and then go *back* to your old life, isn't it? *Something* has got to change. So, Peter says:

2 Peter 1

AKJV

¹² Why I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though you know them, and be established in the present truth.

¹³ Yes, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle [*He's talking about his body being a temporary dwelling.*], to stir you up by putting you in remembrance;

¹⁴ Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, [...]

What does he mean by that? Well, he goes on to explain.

2 Peter 1

AKJV

¹⁴ [...] I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ has showed me.

¹⁵ Moreover I will endeavor that you may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance.

So dying is putting off this tabernacle that we currently dwell in.

2 Peter 1

AKJV

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

I remember Paul kind of emphasized some of this, as well as does John. "You know, we didn't make this stuff up, folks. We were there. We are eyeball witnesses. We saw it happen. We know whereof we speak, and you know we're telling you the truth."

2 Peter 1

AKJV

¹⁷ For he received from God the Father honor 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.

Remember? Peter heard those words on the Mount of Transfiguration, there when he was with Jesus.

2 Peter 1

AKJV

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

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

In other words, “For now, you need to listen carefully to what we’re telling you, because we’re giving you a light in a dark place until the day dawns and the light arises in your *own* heart so you don’t *need* anything from outside.”

2 Peter 1

KJ2000

²⁰ Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of one’s own interpretation.

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

Now, do you start getting the feeling that maybe prophecy might be an issue that is going on there? In the next chapter, Peter begins to get *really serious* about what’s going on. 2 Peter, chapter two:

2 Peter 2

AKJV

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

Now, I can’t help but wonder what he meant about “denying the Lord the bought them”. What do you have to do to deny Christ? Well, remember this from Jude when we went through that last week? Jude, chapter one, verse four:

Jude 1

AKJV

⁴ For there are certain men crept in unawares [...]

I think the word is probably the same thing as “privily” in 2 Peter; that it basically means “secretively”.

Jude 1

AKJV

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.

Turning grace into license—freedom to do whatever it is you want to do. And this is really one of the things that tends to happen in some of the (what shall we call it?) *gospel-lite* that goes on around from time to time: that people have a cheap grace—that you just accept grace and you are saved and you keep on doing whatever it was you used to do. Peter talks about bringing swift destruction on themselves and Jude talks about condemnation of people like this. Paul wrote about it to Timothy. He said:

2 Timothy 2

AKJV

¹¹ It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him:

¹² If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:

¹³ If we believe not, yet he stays faithful: he cannot deny himself.

That's sobering. If *we* deny him, *he* will deny us. Now, Peter on another occasion... This is a sermon that's recounted in the third chapter of Acts—chapter three of Acts, verse 13. He speaks of:

Acts 3

AKJV

¹³ The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his Son Jesus; whom you delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go.

¹⁴ But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted to you;

¹⁵ And killed the Prince of life, whom God has raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.

Now, I think I kind of understand why Peter is sensitive to this. Remember? He *denied Jesus three times*. And Jesus had set him up to understand what he was doing and why it happened, by giving him this example:

Mark 14

KJ2000

³⁰ And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto you, That this day, even in this night, before the cock crows twice, you shall deny me three times.

And on that third denial, Peter heard the rooster crow and realized what he had done. So he's sensitive to *anyone* denying Jesus in *any way*. Here's Jesus, in his own words:

Luke 12

AKJV

⁹ But he that denies me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.

Matthew 10

AKJV

³² Whoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.

³³ But whoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.

So, we have to take this thing very, very seriously. And I think there probably are various and sundry ways of *denying* Christ: denying that he was raised from the dead (as some did), denying the bodily resurrection of Christ (which some do), denying that Jesus even came in the flesh (which is something that people do). You could probably create a *whole list* of things that people deny about Christ. Well, coming back to 2 Peter again, he says:

2 Peter 2

AKJV

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

And I'm afraid that does happen from time to time. "Pernicious"—that's kind of a mean word, isn't it. It means having a harmful effect, *especially* in a gradual or subtle way. Man, you talk about a perfect way to describe what some people tend to do in the church. The Greek word for it [destruction] is *apóleia* [ἀπόλεια, Strong's G684] which means "ruinous or destructive". Many shall follow their *ruinous*, *destructive* ways. By the way, *Apollyon* [Ἀπολλύων, G623], which comes from the same root, appears to

be a name of Satan the destroyer. You find that in Revelation 9, verse 11. These locusts that come out of the bottomless pit and the smoke:

Revelation 9

AKJV

¹¹ And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue has his name Apollyon.

Commentaries assume Satan, and I have wondered if he has an evil twin. So here in the church, we have people whose ways are destructive.

2 Peter 2

AKJV

³ And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingers not, and their damnation slumbers not.

I don't like hearing that, but that's what Peter has to say about this—that they're going to be judged and they're going to be damned for what they do. The "covetousness", "merchandise"—they do it for money or power—which are two ways of saying the same thing, because money is a kind of power. And there are people whose desire for influence over, and power over, other people is *so strong* that they go into a corrupt way of teaching the Bible in order to carve out followings for themselves. It happens. I've seen it happen so many times in my nearly 50 years in the ministry. It's just painful to think about it. But we've got to think about it, lest we be snared into doing it ourselves; lest we go down the wrong path. The one thing I think that Jesus made clear to his disciples is that he did not really want a *power structure* in the church of God. Even the very fact that we get together, we form ourselves into a church, we have a common fund, we put money into it, we go out and build our own building (which we've just done here in Tyler)—we are accumulating power and we are taking a risk when we do it. Because the creation of any kind of power is a temptation to people who are *motivated* by power. It's one of the reasons why I have not wanted to be in charge of a church—not to pastor a church, not to lead a church—but that we are free. You're free and I'm free. You're free to listen to me or not listen to me, and I'm free to say whatever's on my mind—whatever I feel that God has led me to say. Verse four—now here we've got a big if/then statement coming up:

2 Peter 2

AKJV

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

That will kind of make you shudder all by itself.

2 Peter 2

AKJV

⁵ And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly;

⁶ And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample to those that after should live ungodly [*We've got to pay attention to these examples.*];

⁷ And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation [*conduct*] of the wicked:

Now if God does all that, then:

2 Peter 2

AKJV

⁹ The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust to the day of judgment to be punished: ¹⁰ But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.

You know, it's intriguing. Paul teaches mutual submission—which is *only* possible in a covenant. In fact, a husband and wife are to submit to one another—to submit to one another's needs, desires—to submit to the responsibility they have in the relationship. You've got to have a covenant for *mutual* submission to be possible. And in the church, you have the same type of thing. You have mutual submission to one another in the church. Now, in the church there are authorities. They are not always right, but it is never right to run them down—to speak evil of them. And this is what, I think, he is driving at here. It's that these people will cut the legs right out from under the authorities in the church—authorities recognized by the church, authorities *placed* by the church. But in order to get where they want to go, they have to cut them down. Now, if God does this, then he knows how to do that. He goes on to say:

2 Peter 2

AKJV

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

¹² But 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;

Like I said, Peter's tough. He just lays it out for us, and compares people who do this kind of thing—they're not any better than cows, bulls who are taken to be destroyed, made into steaks, and eaten. These people don't understand *any more than a cow* what they're doing, and the damage they're doing. Nor do they understand what's going to happen to them in the end. In verse 13 he says:

2 Peter 2

AKJV

¹³ And 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;

They're not off somewhere else, folks. They're right there with us.

2 Peter 2

AKJV

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

You get through reading these things...I wonder what Peter really thinks about these people? He says they:

2 Peter 2

AKJV

¹⁵ [...] have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;

Balaam was motivated by money; let's face it. That was the thing that drove him down that path.

2 Peter 2

AKJV

¹⁶ But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbade the madness of the prophet.

The story of Balaam and his donkey, I think, is in the Bible to impress upon our minds that God has a sense of irony. "How do I want to speak to Balaam? Well, there's no point sending an angel to talk to him. He'd be just as well off listening to *an ass*. So let's tell him what he needs to know by the ass."

2 Peter 2

AKJV

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

¹⁸ For 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.

He basically seems to be telling us that these people actually drag people back into what they have come out of in the past.

2 Peter 2

AKJV

¹⁹ While 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.

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

I kind of have seen that a few times, of people who turn away from the truth and they wind up, really, in a much worse situation than they were. It would be better for them never to have known the word the truth *at all* than to have known it and then turned away from it. Peter said:

2 Peter 2

AKJV

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 to them.

²² But it is happened to 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.

You know, for Peter to speak of men in the terms that he's using here—what they had done to the church must have been *really ruinous*. For Peter to be motivated this way—for him to have this feeling in his writing, in the descriptiveness of what's going to happen—what they have done must have been *remarkably bad*.

2 Peter 3

AKJV

¹ This second letter, beloved, I now write to you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance:

² That you 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 Savior:

“Okay, I’m writing to you. I want to put the spoon in here and stir this mixture up a little bit, so you’ll be sure and it will be fresh in your mind.”

2 Peter 3

AKJV

³ Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,
⁴ And 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.

You know, I think Peter probably thought he was in the last days. They didn’t know otherwise, and seeing the kind of things that he was seeing made him wonder where we were at. And there have always been... there are people in the pulpit of churches these days who really do not believe in the second coming of Christ. Now, they believe in Christ. They believe he’s in heaven, and when you die you go to heaven. And when you think that the logical progression of that is: If, indeed, as we Christians die in this planet earth here, we go off to be in heaven, why on earth would there be any need for any of us to ever come back here? So they don’t believe Christ is *going* to come back. So all things continue as they were from the beginning; nothing is new. And then he says this:

2 Peter 3

AKJV

⁵ For 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:
⁶ Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:

So how on earth can you say everything continues as it has been since the creation? They’re willingly ignorant of the fact that there was a time when the whole thing was *destroyed*—and *willingly* ignorant. Now, that is a *terrible* condemnation.

2 Peter 3

AKJV

⁷ But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved to fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

That’s rough. Everything is being held until the day of judgment and the perdition of ungodly men. And guess who he includes in that category?

2 Peter 3

AKJV

⁸ But, 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.
⁹ The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; [...]

They think, “Well, God’s just not going to do anything.” But, you know, by that reckoning that Peter gives us, it’s only been *two days* since Peter wrote that letter. Anyway:

2 Peter 3

AKJV

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

You know, that really calls to mind one of the psalms where God lists off a whole line of sins, and then he says, “I have kept silence. You did this, you slandered your own mother’s son, you commit adultery”:

Psalm 50

AKJV

²¹ These things have you done, and I kept silence; you thought that I was altogether such an one as yourself[...]

Big mistake, *big* mistake. Because what that tells us in the psalm is that God is giving us *time to repent*, time to turn around, and that’s what Peter is driving at. God is not willing that any should perish but that *all* should come to repentance—even the wicked souls that Peter is talking about. But, he goes on to say:

2 Peter 3

AKJV

¹⁰ But 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.

Burnt to a crisp. Toast. Now, this is an interesting example of the error of always attaching the same meaning to a word or phrase. In this case: the Day of the Lord. We now know, scientifically, what Peter knew from revelation: that the time is coming in the future when the sun will reach the end of its life. It will begin to grow into a much larger ball and, over a period of some time, it will gradually blow our atmosphere away. It will gradually burn to a crisp everything on the surface of the planet and eventually *melt it down to nothing*. But we also know that this version that he’s talking about here—what I’ll call “Day of the Lord 2.0”—comes *long* after the Day of the Lord featured in a prophetic books of the Bible. And so he’s talking about a Day of the Lord well beyond the the survival of the last man on the face of the planet.

2 Peter 3

AKJV

¹¹ Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, [...]

Take a look. Open a window, look outside. Walk out on the street, look up it, look down it. *Everything* will be dissolved. Look at your house, look at your car. Look at the sidewalk, look at the garden you’ve put in. Look at the tree you planted and how far it’s grown. All of it is going to be dissolved. Now, what kind of a person ought you to be in all holy conduct and godliness? Because nothing of all the things that you’ve done in the flesh—all the physical stuff you’ve accumulated and done—none of it is going to last. It’s worthless except for the beholding of it with your eyes.

2 Peter 3

AKJV

¹¹ [...] what manner of persons ought you to be in all holy conversation and godliness,

¹² Looking for and hastening to the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

It underlines something we must never forget: Even if the evil day lies beyond our mortal life, we have to keep in mind *nothing* we have here—nothing that we have done of the flesh, nothing with rocks and stones and bricks and mortar—will last. It’s only the character that we build in Christ that will last Peter continued:

2 Peter 3

KJ2000

¹³ Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, in which dwells righteousness.

¹⁴ Therefore, beloved, seeing that you look for such things, be diligent [*there’s that word again*] that you may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

¹⁵ And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him has written unto you;

¹⁶ As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; [...]

So Peter says, “I’m saying the same thing Paul’s told you.”

2 Peter 3

KJ2000

¹⁶ [...] speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable twist, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

It’s of passing interest, here, that Peter seems to consider Paul’s letters as “Scripture” at this early date—puts it on par with all the things that they knew from the Old Testament as Scripture. Yeah, we can misunderstand a lot of it but, candidly, it’s the technicians among us that misunderstand. It’s not that hard to grasp what Paul’s driving at. Verse 17:

2 Peter 3

AKJV

¹⁷ You therefore, beloved, seeing you know these things before, beware lest you also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.

Now, I’ve got to tell you this. That sentence makes *no sense at all* if you can’t fall from your steadfastness—if you can’t be where you might do it. It makes no sense if you can’t fall.

2 Peter 3

AKJV

¹⁸ But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

But, you *can’t* grow in these things unless you are *vigilant* and *diligent* and *apply yourself*. And it is to that end that these Bible studies are intended.

Christian Educational Ministries

P.O. Box 560 ❖ Whitehouse, Texas 75791
Phone: 1-888-BIBLE-44 ❖ Fax: (903) 839-9311
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