

THE SECOND LETTER OF PETER ^a

Greeting

1 From Simon^b Peter, an apostle^c of Jesus Christ, to those who've received faith as precious as ours, through the justice^d of our God and Savior Jesus Christ. May grace and peace be multiplied for you, through your knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

Make Sure of Your Calling

After all, his^e divine power has given us everything we need for life and reverence for God. We're given all this through the knowledge of the One who has called us to^f his own glory and virtue.^g Through them, the greatest and most precious promises have been given to us. Because of them, you can escape from the corruption^h that's in the world through lust, and be partners in the divine nature.ⁱ And that's why you should do your very best to fill out your faith with virtue, your virtue with knowledge, your knowledge with self-control, your self-control with endurance, your endurance with reverence for God, your reverence for God with mutual affection, and your mutual affection with love. If these things are in you and growing, they'll make you effective and fruitful^j as you come into the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because the person without these qualities is blind and short-sighted. They're ignoring their cleansing from their past sins. So try all the harder to make sure of your calling and chosenness,^k

^a Many—but not all—Bible scholars think that this letter is pseudonymous—that is, they think it shows signs of having been written by someone else using Peter's name. Pseudonymous writings were common in the ancient world.

^b Many mss spell it "Simeon" (see Acts 15:4).

^c See "Bible Words."

^d Traditionally: "righteousness."

^e That is, Jesus Christ's.

^f Or "by."

^g That is, Jesus. Some mss have "...called us through glory and virtue." Is Peter saying that we're given all we need through our knowledge of Jesus, or through his knowledge (see Isa. 53:11)?

^h That is, rotteness, destruction.

ⁱ Lit. "...us, so that through these you may become sharers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that's in the world by lust."

^j Lit. "they'll make you neither unproductive nor fruitless." In the Greek, the double negatives here ("not unproductive," "not fruitless") convey a stronger, rather than weaker, positive sense.

^k Lit. "make your calling and election reliable." See "Bible Words" under "election."

brothers and sisters. Because if you do these things, you'll be certain not to fail—¹¹and your entrance into the eternal reign of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be generously provided for.^a

¹²So I'm always going to remind you about these things—even though you know them, and you're well grounded in the truth that you have.^b ¹³And I think it's right—as long as I'm in the tent of this mortal body^c—to be stirring you up with reminders. ¹⁴Because I know that the moment for taking off this tent of mine is coming very soon:^d our Lord Jesus Christ has made that clear to me.^e ¹⁵So^f I'm going to do my best to make sure that you'll always remember these things after my departure.

Eyewitnesses to the Glory of God's Son

¹⁶Because when we told you about our Lord Jesus Christ's power, and about his coming, we weren't following clever myths. Far from it—we were eyewitnesses of his greatness. ¹⁷Because when he received honor and glory from God the Father, a voice like this came^g to him from the Majestic Glory: “This is my dear Son! I'm pleased with him!” ¹⁸We were with him on that holy mountain, and we heard that voice coming from heaven. ¹⁹And so we have all the more confidence in the message of the prophets.^h You'll do well to keep your attention on it: use it like a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns, and the morning star rises in your hearts. ²⁰Here's the first point to understand:ⁱ none of the prophecies of scripture come out of^j somebody's own interpretation. ²¹Because prophecy never came by human will. No, it happened when people, carried along by the Holy Spirit, spoke from God.

False Prophets and False Teachers

2 Now, there were also false prophets in Israel.^k And in the same way, there are going to be false teachers among you. They're going to bring in destructive philosophies—even denying the Master who bought them. They're going to bring swift destruction on themselves.^l ²And lots of people are going to imitate^m their

^a Lit. “For, doing these things, you'll by no means ever stumble/fail, for thus entrance into the eternal reign of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be amply/richly provided to you.”

^b Lit. “in the truth that's present with you.”

^c Lit. “in this tent.”

^d Lit. “...reminders, knowing that the taking off of my tent is imminent.” He knows he has only a very short time to live.

^e Lit. “...soon, just as also our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me.”

^f Lit. “And also.”

^g Lit. “was conveyed.”

^h Lit. “And we hold the prophetic word more confidently.” He's referring ahead to vv. 19b-21, not back to vv. 17-18.

ⁱ Lit. “...hearts, knowing this first:”

^j Or “are a matter of.”

^k Lit. “in the people (sg).”

^l Or “...philosophies, and by denying the Master who bought them, they'll bring swift destruction on themselves.”

^m Lit. “follow.”

promiscuous ways.^a And because of them, the true Way^b will be subjected to insults. ³And in their greed for money, they're going to sell you^c made-up stories. Judgment has been ready for them for a long time, and their destruction is waiting attentively.^d

⁴After all, God didn't spare angels when they sinned—far from it. He threw them in dark caves^e in the deepest part of the underworld, and handed them over to be kept there until the judgment. ⁵And God certainly didn't spare the ancient world, but brought a flood on the world^f of the godless.⁸ He only protected Noah, a preacher of justice,^h and seven others. ⁶And he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destructionⁱ by reducing them to ashes. He made them an example to people who'd be godless in the future.^j ⁷And God rescued Lot, a person of integrity, when he was being oppressed by the behavior of lawless, promiscuous people.^k ⁸(As he lived among them, that man of integrity felt tormented^l day after day, as he saw and heard^m lawless things being done.)

⁹If that's all true, thenⁿ the Lord knows how to save people who have reverence for God from temptation. And he knows how to keep unjust people under punishment for the day of judgment—¹⁰and especially those who follow their flesh in a lust for filthiness, and despise authority. People like that are daring and self-centered. They insult glorious angelic beings without fear.^o ¹¹Yet angels, though they're greater in strength and power, don't bring insulting accusations against them.^p ¹²But these people are like irrational animals in nature—bred to be hunted down and killed.^q They insult things they know nothing about, and they're going to be killed just like those animals.^r ¹³They're going to be wronged,

^a Or "licentiousness ways."

^b Lit. "the path of truth." The first Christians called their spiritual path "the Way." See Acts 9:2.

^c Or "they'll exploit you with."

^d Lit. "Judgment hasn't been idle for them from long ago, and their destruction is not falling asleep." Judgment and destruction are personified here, and the double negatives, as in 2 Pet. 1:8, are for emphasis.

^e Many mss have, "in bonds of darkness," the Greek words for "bonds" and "caves" being very close in spelling.

^f Or "civilization."

⁸ Gen. 6-7.

^h Or "right living"; traditionally: "righteousness."

ⁱ Many mss lack the words "to destruction"; they are implied in any case.

^j Lit. "...ashes, having made them an example to coming godless people," or, following other mss, "to those who were about to live godlessly."

^k Gen. 19:1-29.

^l Lit. "tormented his soul."

^m Lit. "...day after day, by seeing and hearing."

ⁿ This is the conclusion of an extended "if-then" argument form that starts in v. 4. I've removed the "if's and created sentences that stand on their own; otherwise vv. 4-10 would be all one long sentence.

^o Lit. "They don't tremble when insulting glories."

^p Some mss add the words, "in front of the Lord," or "from the Lord." Any of these three wordings may be original.

^q Lit. "born for capture and destruction."

^r Lit. "in their destruction [i.e. in the destruction of the animals captured through human hunting], they also are going to be destroyed."

as their reward for doing wrong.^a They regard carousing^b in broad daylight as a pleasure. They're spots and stains—partying away in their self-deceptions.^c They join in your dinner parties, ¹⁴their heads filled with fantasies about seducing people's spouses.^d They never stop sinning. With a heart trained in greed, they seduce people with weak personalities.^e They're a cursed breed!^f ¹⁵They've gone astray and left the straight path, and have followed the path of Balaam, Bosor's^g son.^h He loved getting paid for doing wrong, ¹⁶but he got told off for his lawlessness: a mute donkey spoke with a human voice, and stopped that prophet's madness.

¹⁷These people are springs with no water, mists swept along by a stormy wind.ⁱ The deepest darkness is reserved for them. ¹⁸They talk boastful nonsense, and they seduce people by appealing to their physical lusts for promiscuity. They prey on people who are barely escaping from the majority^j who live in error. ¹⁹They promise them freedom, but they themselves are still slaves of self-destruction.^k After all, if something has mastered somebody, that's what they're enslaved to. ²⁰Because suppose they've escaped from the filthy ways^l of the world through the knowledge of our Lord^m and Savior Jesus Christ—but then they get mixed up in them all over again, and they're overcome by them. In the end, they're worse off than they were in the first place.ⁿ ²¹Because it would have been better for them not to know the path of right living^o at all, than to know it, and to turn away from the holy commandment that had been handed down to them. ²²They've experienced what's said in this true proverb:

A dog goes back to its own vomit,^p

And,

A washed pig goes back to roll in the mud.

^a Some mss have, "They'll suffer the penalty for doing wrong."

^b That is, to party to excess, with intoxication and promiscuity.

^c Some mss have, "in their love feasts" (see Jude 12).

^d Lit. "...dinner parties, with eyes full of adultery" (for "adultery," see "Bible Words").

^e Lit. "weak/unstable souls."

^f Lit. "They're children of a curse." See "Bible Words" under "children of" and "curse."

^g Prn. **bay-lam, boe-sorz.**

^h "Bosor" is usually spelled "Beor." Num. 22–24.

ⁱ See Jude 12.

^j Lit. "those."

^k Lit. "corruption," i.e. rotteness, a metaphor for behaviors (such as drinking and sexual promiscuity) that inevitably lead to the breakdown of people's physical health (see Gal. 6:8).

^l Lit. "defilements."

^m Some mss have, "the Lord."

ⁿ Lit. "The last things have become worse for them than the first."

^o Or "integrity"; traditionally: "righteousness."

^p Prov. 26:11.

The Day of the Lord is Coming

3 Dear friends, this is now the second letter I've written to you. In both of them, I've been trying to reawaken^a your genuine^b understanding with reminders. I've wanted to remind you of the things that have been said by the holy prophets—and of the command of the Lord and Savior that your apostles^c have given. The first thing to understand is this: in the last days,^d scoffers are going to be living in mockery of the faith. They'll be living according to their own obsessions.^e And they'll be saying, "What happened to^f the promise of his coming? Because from the time that our ancestors passed away, everything's been the same^g as it has been since the beginning of creation." They say that because they're deliberately ignoring something:^h long ago the heavens and the earth were put together—out of water, and through water—by God's word. Through those waters, the world of that time was destroyed by flooding. And, by the same word, the present heavens and earth have been reserved for fire. They're being kept for the Day of Judgment, for the destruction of godless people.

And here's one thing you shouldn't ignore,ⁱ dear friends: with the Lord,^j one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years is like one day.^k The Lord isn't slow about the promise—in the way that certain people count slowness.^l Far from it—the Lord is being patient with you.^m God doesn't want people to be lostⁿ—but wants everyone to find room for a change of heart.^o But the Day of the Lord is going to come like a thief.^p On that day,^q the heavens are going to disappear with a roar,^r and the elements are going to burn up and fall apart.^s And the earth, and

^a "...you, in which I am waking up."

^b Or "pure/unmixed."

^c See "Bible Words."

^d This expression "the last days" indicates the time of the transition between this current "age" and the glorious age to come (see Isa. 2:2ff; Acts 2:17).

^e Or "lusts."

^f Lit. "Where is."

^g Lit. "everything remains the same way."

^h Lit. "it escapes their attention willingly that."

ⁱ Lit. "And this one thing shouldn't escape your attention."

^j Or "the Lord." Normally these passages would refer to God, but in view of v. 15 below, they probably refer to the Lord Jesus.

^k Ps. 90:4.

^l Lit. "—as some reckon slowness."

^m Some mss have, "he's being patient because of you."

ⁿ Lit. "...you, not wanting some to perish."

^o Traditionally: "for repentance" (see "Bible Words"). See Ezek. 18:23; 33:11.

^p See Mt. 24:43-44; Lk. 12:39-40; see also 1 Thess. 5:2, 4; Rev. 3:3; 16:15.

^q Lit. "in which."

^r Or "a whoosh."

^s Or "disintegrate."

what's done in it, is going to be discovered.^a ¹¹Since everything is going to be destroyed like that,^b what should you^c be like? You should live holy and reverent lives, ¹²as you look forward to, and work towards,^d the arrival of God's day. That day will set off the fiery disintegration of the heavens, and the elements are going to melt as they burn.^e ¹³But in line with God's promise, we're waiting for "a new heavens and a new earth,"^f where justice^g lives.

Final Words of Encouragement and Warning

¹⁴So, dear friends, as you wait for these things, do your best to be found spotless and blameless—at peace with God.^h ¹⁵And look on the patience of our Lord Jesus as your salvation. It's just like our dear brother Paul has also written to you, by the wisdom that's been given to him.ⁱ ¹⁶He also talks about these things in all his letters. There are certain things in them that are hard to understand—which ignorant and unstable people twist. They also do the same thing to the other scriptures—leading to their own destruction. ¹⁷So then, dear friends, be forewarned—be on your guard. Don't go along with the deception of lawless people and lose^j your own stability. ¹⁸Instead, grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Glory to him—both now and forever. Amen.^k

^a See Isa. 26:21. The mss are very divided about how this puzzling sentence should end: The oldest mss have "is going to be discovered"; other mss say "is going to be burned up completely"; some ancient translations have the word "not," producing "is not going to be discovered," i.e. "is not going to be found"; one has "is not going to appear"; one says "is going to be found disintegrated"; and a number of Greek mss and ancient translations simply leave all or part of the clause out altogether.

^b Some mss lack the words "like that," and make the word "since" explicit.

^c Some mss have, "we," and some just leave it ambiguous between "you" and "we."

^d Lit. "looking forward to and hastening."

^e Lit. "...God's day, because of which the heavens, burning, will disintegrate, and the elements, burning up, will melt."

^f Isa. 65:17; 66:22.

^g Traditionally: "righteousness."

^h Or "spotless and blameless—at peace—by God."

ⁱ E.g. Rom. 2:4.

^j Lit. "fall from."

^k Some mss lack the word "Amen."