

2 Peter

1:1 Simon Peter, a slave and apostle of Jesus the Messiah, to those who have received a belief that is as equally valuable as ours within the framework of the *dikaioσunay* of our God and the Savior, Jesus the Messiah.¹ **1:2** May grace and shalom be multiplied to you in the midst of understanding God and Jesus our Lord.²

1:3 May this happen just as His divine power has given us all things which lead to life and respect for God (πρὸς ζῶην καὶ εὐσέβειαν) through an understanding of Him, who called us with reference to His own glory and excellence (ἰδίᾳ δόξει καὶ ἀρετῇ),³ **1:4** in the light of which He has given us the precious and great promises, so that you have become sharers in His divine order of things through these, because you have escaped from the corruption within the earthly setup that operates by means of evil craving.⁴

1:5 And, indeed, regarding this same thing, while exerting all earnestness (σπουδῆν πᾶσαν), add excellence in the midst of your belief (ἐν τῇ πίστει ὑμῶν τὴν ἀρετῆν), and in the midst of excellence, add knowledge (τὴν γνῶσιν),⁵ **1:6** and in the midst of knowledge, add restraint (τὴν ἐγκράτειαν), and in the midst of restraint, add perseverance (τὴν ὑπομονήν), and in the midst of perseverance, add respect for God (τὴν εὐσέβειαν),⁶ **1:7** and in the midst of respect for God, add brotherly love (τὴν φιλαδελφίαν), and in the midst of brotherly love, add agape love (τὴν ἀγάπην).⁷

1:8 Now, if these things belong to you and are increasing, they cause you to be neither worthless nor unfruitful with respect to your understanding of our Lord Jesus the Messiah.⁸

1:9 In contrast, as for the person where these things are not present, he is so near-sighted that he is blind, because he has lost sight of the cleansing of his former immoral actions.⁹ **1:10** Therefore, brothers, make every effort to make yourselves certain of your calling and selection. And if you do these things, you will never experience disaster,¹⁰ **1:11** because, in this way, the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Messiah, will be richly supplied to you.¹¹

1:12 Therefore, I will always be reminding you of these things, even though you know and have become established in the truth that is present among you.¹² **1:13** I consider it right as long as I am in this “tent” to wake you up by way of reminder,¹³ **1:14** knowing that the removal of my “tent” is imminent, just as indeed our Lord Jesus the Messiah made clear to me.¹⁴ **1:15** And I will make every effort indeed, so that, after my departure, you at any time have the ability to call these things to mind.¹⁵

1:16 It was not by following ingeniously concocted myths that we made known to you the power and appearance of our Lord Jesus the Messiah, but it was because we were eyewitnesses of his grandeur.¹⁶ **1:17** For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, a voice of such a kind was produced for him by the Majestic Glory,

This is my beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased <Matthew 17:1-13; Mark 9:2-13; Luke 9:28-36>.¹⁷

1:18 And we heard this voice, which was produced out of heaven, while we were with him on the holy mountain.¹⁸ **1:19** Thus, we have with greater certainty the prophetic message to which you do well to pay attention as a lamp shining in a dark place until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts,¹⁹ **1:20** while knowing this first and foremost, that every prophetic comment contained in scripture is not a matter of the person's own explanation of God.²⁰ **1:21** For no prophetic comment was ever produced by means of the will of man, but men, being moved by the Holy Spirit, spoke from God.²¹

2:1 Nevertheless, indeed, false prophets arose among the people, just as also there will be among you false teachers, who will introduce destructive ideas and will refuse to pay attention to the Owner who bought them. While they bring imminent destruction upon themselves,²² **2:2** indeed, many will follow their immoral actions that are characterized by an utter lack of self-restraint (αὐτῶν ταῖς ἀσελγείαις). Because of them, the way of truth will be spoken of disrespectfully,²³ **2:3** and with greed they will sell you man-made statements. Condemnation for them is not lingering for a long time, and their destruction is not dozing.²⁴

2:4 For if God did not refrain from dealing with *angeloi* who behaved in an evil manner, but instead relegated them to Tartarus with chains of gloom and delivered them over to judgment where they are being kept,²⁵ **2:5** and if He did not refrain from dealing with the ancient world, but nevertheless preserved Noah, a proclaimer of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the disrespectful,²⁶ **2:6** and if He turned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes when He condemned them to destruction, having made them an example for future disrespectful people (μελλόντων ἄσεβέ[σ]τιν),²⁷ **2:7** while He rescued righteous Lot, who was being worn down by the lifestyle of lawless men in the midst of their utter lack of moral self-restraint (ἐν ἀσελγείᾳ),²⁸ **2:8** (for, by what he saw and what he heard, this righteous man felt his righteous soul tormented by their lawless deeds, while he dwelt among them day after day),²⁹ **2:9** then the Lord knows how to rescue the respectful from testing/temptation, and how to keep for the day of judgment the unrighteous who will be punished,³⁰ **2:10** and especially those who proceed in their lives behind the leading of the flesh in the midst of their passion for uncleanness and who disregard authority. They are reckless, bold, self-willed people. They do not tremble when they speak disrespectfully of majestic things,³¹ **2:11** whereas *angeloi*, even though they are greater in strength and power, do not bring a defaming judgment against them before the Lord.³²

2:12 But these, like irrational animals who have been born in accordance with the natural order of things for the purpose of being captured and destroyed, because they speak disrespectfully in regard to things of which they have no good intellectual grasp, will indeed be destroyed because of their corruption.³³ **2:13** They will justifiably receive the wage that comes from wrongdoing. They consider it a daily luxury to satisfy their pleasures. They are stains and blemishes as they revel in their aesthetic deceptions while hanging out with you.³⁴ **2:14** They have eyes full of adultery and constantly restless for evil while they lure unestablished persons. They have a heart that has been trained in greed, and are children of

the curse.³⁵ **2:15** They have wandered about aimlessly, because they have abandoned the straight path. They have followed the path of Balaam of Bosor who loved the reward of wrongdoing.³⁶ **2:16** Indeed, he received a rebuke for his own lawless act. A dumb donkey halted the insanity of the prophet when it spoke with the voice of a man.³⁷

2:17 These are waterless springs and dark clouds in the sky, driven by a huge storm, for whom the gloom of darkness has been preserved.³⁸ **2:18** Indeed, while talking about boastful things that serve no good purpose, they lure, in the midst of strong desires of the flesh, in the midst of actions that completely lack moral self-restraint (ἀσελγείαις), those who barely escape from them who conduct themselves in error,³⁹ **2:19** Even as they promise them freedom, they are slaves of destruction, because by that which a person is overcome, to this he has been enslaved.⁴⁰

2:20 Thus, if, after having escaped from the shameful deeds of the earthly setup by means of knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Messiah, they have become overcome by them, getting entangled in these things again, the last things have become worse for them than the first.⁴¹ **2:21** It would be better for them not to have known the way of *dikaioσunay* than, having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment which had been delivered to them.⁴²

2:22 The point of the true proverb has happened to them,

A dog returns to its own vomit <Proverbs 26:11>, and

A pig, after washing herself, returns to wallowing in the mud.⁴³

3:1 I am, in fact, writing to you, brothers, this second letter in which, i.e., in both of them, I am waking up your unmixed intention by means of a reminder,⁴⁴ **3:2** so that you remember the words spoken previously by the prophets who were set apart and the commandment of the Lord and Savior of your apostles.⁴⁵

3:3 Know this first of all, that in the last days those who ridicule the truth will come with their ridicule as they go on their way in accordance with their own evil passions⁴⁶ **3:4** even saying,

Where is the promise of his appearance? For since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of the creation.⁴⁷

3:5 In the midst of willfully choosing this, one thing that they are unwilling to recognize is that the heavens had existed from long ago and that the earth was established out of water and through the means of water within the story of God,⁴⁸ **3:6** because of which the earthly setup at that time was destroyed, when it was flooded with water.⁴⁹ **3:7** And, now, the heavens and earth have been reserved for fire with reference to the same story, as they are being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of men who do not respect God (τῶν ἀσεβῶν ἀνθρώπων).⁵⁰

3:8 And let not you be unwilling to recognize this one thing, beloved, that one day for the Lord is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day.⁵¹ **3:9** The Lord of promise is not “delaying” as some think of delay, but He is being patient towards us. He does not desire some of us to be destroyed but for all to make the move to repentance.⁵² **3:10** Then, the Day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a loud, rushing noise, and the elements will be destroyed by being burned up. Indeed, the earth and the works in it will not be found.⁵³

3:11 Because all these things are being destroyed in this way, what kind of people is it necessary for us to be in the midst of set apart lifestyles and actions that demonstrate respect for God (εὐσεβείαις),⁵⁴ **3:12** as we wait for and hasten the appearance of the Day of God, on account of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning and the elements will melt by burning?⁵⁵ **3:13** Thus, according to His promise, we are waiting for a new heavens and a new earth, in which moral perfection dwells.⁵⁶ **3:14** Therefore, beloved, while you wait for these things, make every effort to be found by Him in a state of shalom, spotless and without blemish.⁵⁷

3:15 Indeed, regard the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom that was given to him,⁵⁸ **3:16** as that which also exists in all his letters, speaking in them concerning these things. Contained in the letters are some things hard to understand, which the unlearned and unstable distort, just as they do the rest of the writings to their own destruction.⁵⁹

3:17 You, therefore, beloved, because you know this ahead of time, be on your guard, so that you do not fall from your own firmness of commitment by being lead away by the error of unprincipled men.⁶⁰ **3:18** Instead, grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Messiah. To him be the glory, both now and into the day of the age. Amen.⁶¹

¹ Συμμεῶν Πέτρος δούλος καὶ ἀπόστολος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῖς ἰσότημον ἡμῖν λαχοῦσιν πίστιν ἔν δικαιοσύνη' τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν καὶ σωτήρος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ – Two clues that indicate that Peter is writing to Jews. 1) Peter indicates in 1:16-21 that the apostles James, John, and he were the ones who told these Christians about the NT message, thus making it probable that they are Jews who visited Jerusalem for one of the OT festivals and then returned to their foreign city. 2) Peter says in 3:15 that Paul had also written a letter to these people. Perhaps the letter was Hebrews, which is obviously written to Jewish believers who are being persecuted by Jewish non-believers.

Certainly, because of Luke's mentioning Gentile converts to Judaism as those who are in the crowd in Jerusalem who are witnessing the foreign language phenomenon of Pentecost, it is plausible that Gentiles heard the gospel of Jesus for the first time from Peter, James, and John in Jerusalem during one of the three required Jewish festivals. And, then, it is possible that Paul wrote to them to encourage them, because of his being the apostle to the Gentiles, so that Peter has written them two letters (with this being the second – cf. 3:1), and Paul has written them one.

If, therefore, Peter's readers are Jews in whose community the rabbis, i.e., scribes and Pharisees, gave the impression that, as leaders and educated students of the OT, they were more valuable to God than them, then Peter is stating something quite profound about the NT message—that all Christians obtain the same gift from God, eternal mercy through the Messiah Jesus (i.e., the king and high priest of the eternal realm) and citizenship in the Kingdom of God. Therefore, the belief of his readers comes with the same privilege as that of the apostles—eternal life. And all of this is happening within God's project of bringing about eternal forgiveness and mercy for human beings that includes an inward condition of being primed and ready for eternity within the present realm.

Thus, Peter can say that these Christians have *received*, not produced, their belief. It is not something that they humanly brought about in and of themselves. Instead, *God* produced it within them by changing their inwardness and causing them to believe the truth of the apostolic message.

² χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη πληθυνθεῖη ἐν ἐπιγνώσει τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ καὶ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν – Peter's readers have heard the NT message of Jesus as the Messiah from James, John, and him and now understand the most important ideas that the transcendent God has desired to communicate to human beings. Therefore, Peter's own desire is that God's independent and initiating kindness, along with His promise of a shalom-like existence in eternity, continue to be extended toward his readers. Peter is saying that the key to a person's eternal destiny is their worldview to which they have committed themselves. If a person is committed to an authentic understanding of the transcendent Creator and His Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, then it makes sense for an apostle like Peter to desire that God continue to extend His undeserved kindness that leads to and eternal existence of morality and wholeness to those who have come to this understanding through having had the apostolic message presented to them.

³ Ὡς ἔ πάντα ἡμῖν τῆς θείας δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ τὰ πρὸς ζωὴν καὶ εὐσέβειαν δεδορημένης διὰ τῆς ἐπιγνώσεως τοῦ καλέσαντος ἡμᾶς ἰδίᾳ δόξῃ καὶ ἀρετῇ – Peter comments on one of the most remarkable occurrences within human history—that God exercised His power to call the twelve, and eventually thirteen (Paul as the apostle to the Gentiles), plain citizens of Israel to be the Messiah's authoritative spokesmen, i.e., his apostles.

The “all things which lead to life and respect for God through and understanding of Him” were the message that these men learned from the Messiah and which provided them with all that they needed intellectually to attain God's primary commodity for human beings, eternal life. This message included the wisdom to pursue a proper existence of obeying God within the present realm, because a person desires to show the utmost admiration for God, His role, and His authority over reality. If God says, “Jump,” we have the right to say only, “How high,” and then obey Him perfectly. God's plan was to point these apostles to His greatness and excellence as the one Creator God who is good, loving, gracious, and merciful. If ἀρετὴ refers to God's “excellence” per se, then we can think of it as all that makes God great in His character and personhood. Thus it includes at the very least His perfect rationality and His moral perfection that lead Him to act with sound judgment and undivided commitment to goodness as defined by His own character.

⁴ δι' ὧν τὰ ἴτιμα καὶ μέγιστα ἡμῖν ἐπαγγέματα³ δεδώρηται, ἵνα διὰ τούτων γένησθε θείας κοινωνοὶ φύσεως ἀποφυγόντες τῆς ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἐν ἐπιθυμίᾳ φθοράς – Peter says that, in light of God's selecting and inwardly moving the apostles to understand and proclaim the greatness of God, the message that the apostles learned included a knowledge of the fulfillment of the Abrahamic promises of land, descendants, and eternal life to the Jews.

Peter goes on to say that the purpose that God had for the apostles' learning and proclaiming the ideas about the Messiah and the Abrahamic promises was so that his readers could participate in the God-made project of the eternal Kingdom of God and proceed towards it now. (Some translations use “nature” to translate φύσεως, which could easily be interpreted as God's own divine substance. However, the word in other NT uses refers to the way things are, i.e., how they are put together constituting a particular order or arrangement. Thus, Peter means the planned state of things that God intends for authentic believers to experience, which someday will be the Kingdom of God that will persist into eternity. There is, then, a transition from God's divine power/authority that worked among/in the apostles (τῆς θείας δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ – v. 3) to God's divine order or arrangement of reality that will be the eternal Kingdom of God (θείας κοινωνοὶ φύσεως – v. 4))

As a result, their being committed to heading towards eternal life involves their transitioning in the present realm from the manner in which Jews live within their humanly derived interpretation of the Mosaic Covenant, an interpretation that stems solely from their moral depravity that craves to rebel against God, which is simply *the* order of things or

setup in this present realm, the κόσμος. In the light of God's having inwardly changed Peter's readers, they have transitioned to a life of properly pursuing obedience to God. Thus, Peter implies that his readers have categorically left behind their old way of life, legalistic rabbinic Judaism, and embraced a new way of life, Messianic Judaism, that is based upon God's grace and the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, who has now made his initial appearance.

⁵ Καὶ 'αὐτὸ τοῦτο δὲ' σπουδὴν πᾶσαν παρεισενέγκαντες ἐπιχορηγήσατε ἐν τῇ πίστει ὑμῶν τὴν ἀρετὴν, ἐν δὲ τῇ ἀρετῇ τὴν γνῶσιν – These next three verses detail the natural steps that Peter lists for his readers as authentic Christians to demonstrate they have willfully and inwardly left behind their old mentality and lifestyle of legalistic Judaism, i.e., that they have “escaped from the corruption within the earthly system that operates by means of evil craving” (v. 4).

Peter states that those to whom he is writing should pursue these natural steps “in the midst of their belief.” Thus, belief in the apostolic message is foundational to their acting and behaving in a manner that appropriately corresponds to this message. In addition, Peter expects them to be all in when it comes to what he is commanding them here. They should make every effort with an intense and committed conviction that the message that they are believing is true and that it is worth obeying for the sake of God's eternal mercy in the eternal Kingdom of God. Thus, their intense fervency to be authentic followers of Yahweh should include a concerted, real, human effort.

As a result, Peter exhorts his readers to add ἀρετὴ to their biblical intensity. In v. 3, Peter used this word to describe God along with His glory, δόξη. If ἀρετὴ is God's “excellence” *per se*, then we can think of it as referring to all that makes God great in His character, especially His perfect rationality and moral perfection that lead to His acting with sound judgment and undivided commitment to goodness as defined by His own being. Thus, Peter is asking his readers to make every effort to be great human beings, even in the midst of their continuing to be morally depraved, by thinking rationally and morally as much as possible in order to act with sound judgment and undivided commitment to biblical goodness.

In addition, they should add a stable and growing (cf. 1:8) knowledge of the biblical and apostolic message that they have heard from Peter, James, and John (cf. 1:18ff.), because it is only appropriate to learn as much as one can about the transcendent Creator of the reality in which they exist. Cf. 1 Peter for statements regarding these same concepts.

⁶ ἐν δὲ τῇ γνώσει τὴν ἐγκράτειαν, ἐν δὲ τῇ ἐγκρατείᾳ τὴν ὑπομονήν, ἐν δὲ τῇ ὑπομονῇ τὴν εὐσέβειαν – Next, Peter exhorts his readers to add moral restraint to their repertoire of biblical characteristics. Because they are still morally depraved, even in the midst of their being Christians and having authentic belief, they will find themselves wanting to disobey God, probably on a daily and sometimes on a moment by moment basis. In fact, they will actually disobey God, because they do not become morally perfect until they reach the eternal Kingdom of God. Nevertheless, they have embraced the message of Jesus as the Messiah that promises them mercy and morality in eternity. Therefore, Peter is encouraging them use as much self-control and restraint as they can personally muster to choose not to follow their desire to disobey God.

To this restraint from immorality, they should make every effort to persevere in their belief in the midst of all the pressures to abandon belief in God and follow the erroneous Jewish system of religion that is based upon an improper view of the Mosaic Covenant and that was current in their day, as Jesus himself discovered and spoke against. Then, they should also add behavior that demonstrates the respect for God that He deserves, i.e., behavior that understands that God is the ultimate authority in all of reality and, therefore, should be obeyed. Thus, their behavior should reflect God's moral commandments and should reveal that these Jewish Christians are actually different from their fellow Jews who are also attempting to obey God's moral commandments, but with the wrong perspective because of their fundamental unbelief in and disregard for Jesus as the Messiah.

⁷ ἐν δὲ τῇ εὐσεβείᾳ τὴν φιλαδελφίαν, ἐν δὲ τῇ φιλαδελφίᾳ τὴν ἀγάπην – At the end of Peter's list of what should follow from having become an authentic believer is, first, brotherly love and care for each other within the community of Christians and, second, an inward love for God.

⁸ ταῦτα γὰρ ὑμῖν ὑπάρχοντα καὶ πλεονάζοντα οὐκ ἀργούς οὐδὲ ἀκάρπους καθίστησιν εἰς τὴν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐπίγνωσιν – Peter indicates that the presence and even increase of the qualities and things that he exhorted his readers to provide themselves in the previous three verses (even if what he means by “increasing” is a firmer single-minded commitment to these qualities) would mean that they are technically living worthwhile lives that has all to do with their grasping and embracing a proper understanding of Jesus as the Messiah. This is to say that they are matching their lives with their intellectual understanding and persevering in their understanding. In the light of the next verses that speak of someone's abandoning his belief in Jesus as the Messiah, the increase of these qualities that Peter is talking about refers to a person's becoming more firmly committed inwardly to the truth of the NT message in the midst of demonstrating these qualities as much as possible.

⁹ ὃ γὰρ μὴ πάρεστιν ταῦτα, τυφλός ἐστιν μωπάζων, λήθην λαβὼν τοῦ καθαρισμοῦ τῶν πάλαι αὐτοῦ ἁμαρτιῶν – Jewish readers clue – Peter uses the OT word “cleansing” (καθαρισμός). Rather than address the issue of the “world” so to speak that is made up of people who in general rebel against God in the midst of their ignorance of the biblical message, Peter goes on to talk about unbelievers who have heard this message and have even demonstrated some initial level of attraction to it. In the light of the possibility that Peter's readers are Jews to whom Paul wrote Hebrews, Peter is speaking about Jewish believers in that community who could not sustain their faith in the midst of the intense persecution that they were enduring and who could find strength in even Paul's letter. Thus, Peter says that the person who does not demonstrate the kind of qualities that he listed, even if he had apparently embraced the message of Jesus

as the Messiah and claimed to understand it, is in fact an unbeliever. In other words, these qualities are indeed a necessary requirement for obtaining God's mercy, just as is a fundamental belief in Jesus as the Messiah after hearing about him. If belief is not accompanied by a fundamental desire to continue to belief and grow in one's understanding of God, along with a pursuit of basic morality, then the belief is not genuine and will not last.

Peter will go on in chapter 2 to discuss false teachers who have heard and supposedly believed the apostolic message. However, they have given up their belief and gone back to the erroneous ideas that they held prior to being exposed to the gospel. Indeed, this very human condition of believing truth and subsequently going back to lies is a major theme of this letter. Next, Peter will encourage his readers to make sure they do not do this.

¹⁰ διὸ μᾶλλον, ἀδελφοί, σπουδάσατε τ βεβαίαν ὑμῶν τὴν κλήσιν καὶ ἐκλογὴν ποιείσθαι ταῦτα γὰρ ποιοῦντες οὐ μὴ πταίσητέ ὅποτε – Peter is saying that once a person comes to a knowledge of Jesus as the Messiah through whom he obtains God's mercy at the judgment, he should always pursue making himself certain that he is a genuine believer and has been selected by God to be such. This is the most valuable self-knowledge that a human being can possess. If a person does make himself certain and does pursue growth in the qualities that Peter has listed, then he will never experience the awful consequences of God's eternal condemnation that occur for those who abandon their belief in Jesus. Consequently, there is great value in accurate self-knowledge in regard to one's biblical belief.

¹¹ οὕτως γὰρ πλουσίως ἐπιχορηγηθήσεται ὑμῖν ἡ εἴσοδος τ εἰς τὴν αἰώνιον βασιλείαν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν καὶ σωτήρος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ – Peter is saying that the above is how a person survives God's judgment and is given a clear and completely unobstructed "path" that he "walks" from the judgment into the eternal Kingdom of God. Cf. Isaiah 26:19, "Your dead will live; their corpses will rise. You who lie in the dust, awake and shout for joy, for your dew is as the dew of the dawn, and the earth will give birth to the departed spirits (לְיָמֵי מִצְרַיִם) (ἡ δὲ γῆ τῶν ἀσεβῶν πεσεῖται)." However, compare the LXX translation of Isaiah 26:14 & 19 with respect to ἀσεβῶν –
ιατροί=healers, doctors in v. 14 and τῶν ἀσεβῶν=ungodly in v. 19. Nevertheless, it makes more sense in the context of Isaiah that certainly the first be translated ἀσεβεῖς, so that it refers to ungodly people who have oppressed the Jews, the people of God. Then, in v. 19, consistent with the other lines in the verse, it refers merely to Israelites who have died but were people of authentic belief, so that, now, they will realize eternal life.

¹² Διὸ μελλήσω· αἰεὶ ὑμᾶς ὑπομνήσκω περὶ τούτων καίπερ εἰδόμενος καὶ ἐστηριγμένους ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ ἀληθείας – Because the outcome of such a pursuit, which is eternal life, is so important and valuable to Peter's readers, he feels it necessary to say these things over and over, even though they already know them—even from Paul! Who knows. It may be just this time that a person, humanly speaking, responds to Peter's exhortations, when he may have abandoned his belief in Jesus in the midst of the hardships of life and the temptation to avoid persecution.

Peter calls the apostolic message the truth is among them, which is to say it comprises the true ideas that Peter and others have presented to them and circulates among them as authentic believers. This is in contrast to the false ideas that also circulate among them and against which Peter is writing.

¹³ δίκαιον δὲ ἠγοῦμαι, ἐφ' ὅσον εἰμι ἐν τούτῳ τῷ σκηνώματι, διεγείρειν ὑμᾶς ἐν τ ὑπομνήσει – Peter refers to a common syndrome among human beings, even after they become inwardly changed by God and authentic believers in the truth. They easily become dull in the understanding of the truth, as if they have gone to sleep and are no longer able to think about reality in a well-mannered way. Peter feels a moral rightness to wake his readers up and to repeat what they already know over and over as part of what they need to persevere in their belief to the end of their lives.

¹⁴ εἰδὼς ὅτι ταχινή ἐστὶν ἡ ἀπόθεσις τοῦ σκηνώματός μου ἡ καθὼς καὶ ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ἐδήλωσέν μοι – Peter's sense of the rightness of his repeating his exhortations to his readers is enhanced by the fact that he believes that he does not have long to live, with the idea, obviously, that his death will end any opportunity to speak to them again with a personal letter or in person. Or, perhaps, he is thinking that the letter will outlast him and, therefore, be the way that he can repeat these things after he no longer can personally. Jesus had somehow informed Peter that his life would not be a long one or would end violently like his own (cf. John 21:17-19).

¹⁵ σπουδάσω δὲ ὅκαὶ ἐκάστοτε ἔχειν ὑμᾶς μετὰ τὴν ἐμὴν ἐξοδὸν τὴν τούτων μνήμην ποιείσθαι – Peter is thinking either of the mere effort of writing this letter as the means for their being able to recall these ideas from the document after his death. Or he is thinking of putting the kind of effort into this letter that makes these ideas as clear and understandable as possible to his readers so that they can recall them later, even if they do not have access to the actual letter itself.

¹⁶ Οὐ γὰρ σεσοφισμένοις μύθοις ἐξακολουθήσαντες ἐγνωρίσαμεν ὑμῖν τὴν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δύναμιν καὶ παρουσίαν ἀλλ' ἐπόπτει γεννηθέντες τῆς ἐκείνου μεγαλειότητος – Here, the "we" must refer to the Peter, James, and John as members of the original apostles and not to, for example, Paul or even any of the other apostles. Therefore, these are Christians to whom Paul has written (2 Peter 3:15) but who did not hear the message of Jesus the Messiah originally from him. They heard it from Peter and/or James and/or John and, most likely, therefore, in Jerusalem, because of the strong possibility that these men never left Jerusalem on the basis of no mention in Acts or other NT documents of their having done so. In addition, Peter's readers must be from a city outside of Jerusalem and relatively far away, because he is writing them a letter. Therefore, they must have visited Jerusalem, probably during one of the three OT festivals, and maybe even asked to see the head apostles because they had heard about and become intrigued with the news of Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah. Then, they had become believers, returned to their Jewish community in some other city, perhaps even outside of Israel proper, and now were being encouraged by Peter in their faith through this letter. Consequently, could this group be the Jewish Christian community to whom Paul wrote

Hebrews? If so, then Peter has written to them before, too, but not with 1 Peter (cf. 2 Peter 3:1 and my notes on 1 Peter). In this verse, Peter is claiming to have been an eyewitness of Jesus' life as the Messiah, including the incident on the mountain when Moses and Elijah appeared to Jesus along with the voice out of heaven from the transcendent Father that stated clearly Jesus' identity and role as the Son of God (cf. Matthew 17:1-13). Only James and John were with Jesus and Peter at this time.

Two broad possibilities – 1) Someone is accusing the apostles of making up the story and message of Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah, e.g., the leaders of current rabbinic Judaism who may be claiming that the apostles have embellished the stories of Jesus to make him out to be the God-ordained and resurrected Messiah (whereas, in stark contrast to this, Peter, James, and John experienced firsthand God's miraculous actions toward Jesus to verify his Messiahship), or 2) Peter is accusing all those who present explanations of reality that do not include Jesus as the Messiah of concocting myths (=explanations of reality that are not based upon an accurate understanding of the OT and reality). Narrowing this last possibility, Peter is talking about either a) Gentile pagans who have made up all the myths of their polytheism that explain their gods, or b) Jewish rabbis who have made up the Oral Law that they teach within Judaism. If Peter is writing to Jewish Christians, then either 1) or 2b). It seems more likely that 1) is the case, that the false teachers, like the Jews against whom Paul writes Hebrews, are denying that Jesus is the Messiah while continuing to worship with the Jewish believers, because this is what they all have always done in the Jewish community in which they live. However, in this case, the false teachers are encouraging the Jewish believers to abandon their belief in Jesus as the Messiah and return to be simply Mosaic Covenant following Jews.

¹⁷ λαβὼν γὰρ παρὰ τῆς θεοῦ πατρὸς τιμὴν καὶ δόξαν φωνῆς ἐνεχθείσης αὐτῷ τοιάσδε ὑπὸ τῆς μεγαλοπρεποῦς δόξης· ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός μου οὗτός ἐστιν· “εἰς ὃν ἐγὼ εὐδόκησα – Peter's “proof” of the veracity of his information about Jesus is the miraculous existence of God's voice from His transcendent position of Jesus' identity and role. The reference to God's speaking to these three men then allows Peter to comment in the following verses on the role of a prophet of God. It must involve God's communicating to the prophet exactly what He wants him to say on His behalf. Therefore, Peter, James, and John had not only Jesus' instructing them as the Messiah, but also the transcendent God's instructing them through His own audible voice within the creation. By virtue of the two manners in which these three men had received truth from God, i.e., through His Messiah and through His own voice, they took on the role of true prophets to the people.

¹⁸ καὶ ταύτην τὴν φωνὴν ἡμεῖς ἠκούσαμεν ἔξ οὐρανοῦ ἐνεχθείσαν σὺν αὐτῷ ὄντες ἐν τῷ ἁγίῳ ὄρει· – Even though the gospel accounts indicate that there were several occasions when God spoke like this into the created reality about Jesus, Peter refers to just one time specifically, that on the so-called Mt. of Transfiguration (cf. Matthew 17:1-13). Could he be referring to this particular time because of its similarity to Moses who heard the voice of God on Mt. Sinai, from which the rabbinic leaders are claiming that they are deriving their authoritative understanding of God and reality? Thus, Peter would be saying to them that James, John, and he had their own Moses-like experience with the transcendent Creator that went on to include their being taught the biblical message by the Messiah himself. In any event, the “we” can refer to just the three apostles who were there—Peter, James and John, the latter two being brothers.

The point that Peter is making that, in spite of what the false teachers are saying, he has divine proof that Jesus is the Messiah, which means that his readers have a divine and moral obligation to listen to and believe what he has to say about Jesus. Cf. v. 19.

¹⁹ καὶ ἔχομεν βεβαιότερον τὸν προφητικὸν λόγον, ὃ καλῶς ποιεῖτε προσέχοντες ὡς λύχνῳ φαίνοντι ἐν ἀσχηρῷ τόπῳ, ἕως οὗ τῆς ἡμέρας διαυγάσει καὶ ἠέλιος ἀνατείλει ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν – On the basis of his eyewitness experience with both Jesus as the Son of God and the transcendent Creator, Peter can claim that James, John, and he have just that much more certainty of the truth of what they proclaim, which he calls the “prophetic message” (τὸν προφητικὸν λόγον), i.e., the information about Jesus as the Messiah that originally came from the transcendent Creator and was conveyed by not only Jesus' own words, but also the events of his life. Peter and the other apostles learned of the Messiah through the “prophetic message” so to speak that was the life and words of the Messiah himself. Peter, James, and John became even more confident in the veracity of this message and its messianic ideas when, on the Mt. of Transfiguration, they saw Jesus change into a brightly shining icon of God and they heard Yahweh explicitly declare in their human language from His transcendent position that Jesus is the Davidic king. We know from the gospel accounts that this statement by God occurred on two other occasions also (cf. Matt. 3:17; 12:18; 17:5; Mark 1:11; 9:7; 12:6; Luke 3:22; 20:13. Also cf. John 12:28).

In addition, because of the eternal impact of this message, Peter says that his readers should give great enduring attention to it throughout the rest of their lives, implying that doing so will result in a great benefit for them. The presence of this information is like a lamp that shines in the moral and spiritual darkness that exists on earth apart from it, just as Paul says in Ephesians 5:16, “The days are evil” (cf. John 1:5 – Indeed, the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not win out over it). Thus, if someone wants to live life well and not “stumble” over unseen rocks of error, he should embrace the “light” of the message of Jesus as the Messiah. The result will be that the “day will dawn and the morning star will rise in a person's heart,” meaning that the person will experience the transition from the present dark realm of moral depravity through the final judgment to the bright morning light of the eternal Kingdom of God where Jesus will reign as king.

There are other passages that use the phrase “morning star,” such as Revelation 2:28, where Jesus says that he will give

“the morning star” (τὸν ἀστέρᾳ τὸν πρωϊνόν) to the person who endures in his belief. Then, in Revelation 22:16, Jesus calls himself “the bright morning star” (ὁ ἀστὴρ ὁ λαμπρὸς ὁ πρωϊνός). There is also Isaiah 14:12, where the evil king of Babylon is called “the star of the morning, son of the dawn” (כִּי־יָבִי־בֶן־לְבֹרֶךְ) (ὁ ἑωσφόρος ὁ πρωὶ ἀνατέλλων).

Consequently, this label was an idiomatic expression in the agricultural societies of the ANE that referred to the optimistic hope that people could have when nighttime ended and morning dawned that they were alive and well for surviving another day whereby they could do the work that was necessary in order to provide food, shelter, clothing, and protection from their enemies for themselves. Even the king of Babylon had referred to himself this way as the supposedly wise and powerful ruler of his people, thus elevating himself above Yahweh in his own mind and in the mind of the subjects of his empire. In a similar vein, Peter calls eternal life the “morning star” for his readers, because it will be when they transition from this dark and immoral realm into it that they will experience the same kind of optimistic hope and enjoyment that the ANE people experienced when every day dawned a new day.

²⁰ τοῦτο πρῶτον γινώσκοντες ὅτι πᾶσα ᾠροφητεία γραφῆς ἰδίας ἐπιλύσεως οὐ γίνεται – Jewish readers clue – Peter uses the word “writing/scripture” (γραφῆ) to refer to the OT. Option #1 – Peter affirms that a proper explanation of the OT prophets’ message cannot come merely from whatever human beings might want to imagine that it is. Option #2 – Peter affirms that a proper explanation of God by the OT prophets did not ultimately come from them, but from God.

In the case of James, John, and him, Peter is following up on what he said in vs. 16 & 17 to the effect that it was God who “told” him (and James and John) that Jesus is the Messiah through Jesus’ life and words, including the experience that they had when God explicitly spoke from His transcendent position into the story of the created reality. Therefore, option #2 above makes more sense, so that Peter is also saying that the false teachers’ authority to speak on behalf of God is nothing in comparison to James’, John’s, and his. The false teachers have not heard from God. James, John, and Peter have. By this they are “certain” that what they say about Jesus is true. Can the false teachers cite a similar experience with God? Obviously not.

Similarly, should people just start talking about God as though they know what they are talking about, as though God has given them the “prophetic message” so to speak, even if they have “studied” the Bible and been “trained” by supposedly reputable instructors, e.g., seminary professors, or, perhaps, are members of this esteemed class of Christians, i.e., seminary professors and ordained pastors? No. All they can do is point to the apostles and other biblical authors while getting out of the way of individuals’ doing their own work.

²¹ οὐ γὰρ θελήματα ἀνθρώπου ἠνέχθη ἡ ᾠροφητεία ποτέ, ἀλλὰ ὑπὸ πνεύματος ἁγίου φερόμενοι ἐλάλησαν ἄπὸ θεοῦ ἄνθρωποι – Peter is stating categorically and unambiguously that the explanations of God in the OT are not from the imaginations of man but from the mouth of God. Thus, they are true. In the same way, Peter is claiming apostolic authority for James, John, and himself as those who initially and now in letter have presented the “prophetic message” of the NT ideas of Jesus as the Messiah to these readers. Just as the OT prophets’ ideas about Yahweh were true, Peter’s ideas about Jesus as the Messiah are true.

cf. Jeremiah 23:21,22 – I did not send the prophets, but they ran. I did not speak to them, but they spoke. But if they had stood in My council, then they would have made My people hear My words, and they would have turned them back from their evil way and from the evil of their actions.

²² Ἐγένοντο δὲ καὶ ψευδοπροφήται ἐν τῷ λαῷ, ὡς καὶ ἐν ὑμῖν ἔσονται ψευδοδιδάσκαλοι, οἵτινες παρεισάξουσιν αἰρέσεις ἀπωλείας καὶ τὸν ἀγοράσαντα αὐτοὺς δεσπότην ἀρνούμενοι. ἐπάγοντες ἑαυτοῖς ταχινὴν ἀπώλειαν – Having used in the previous verses the example of prophets as spokesmen of God in the OT, Peter now refers to the fact that there were people who claimed to be spokesmen for God in the OT, but who disseminated lies for the sake of their own egos and not for God. While it should be obvious that a person cannot speak on behalf of God without God’s making it clear that He is granting this responsibility and privilege to him, certain people in OT times arrogantly did try to pawn themselves off as authoritative, divine spokesmen when they had no business doing so.

For example, Jeremiah 23:16, “Thus says Yahweh of hosts, ‘Do not listen to the words of the prophets who are prophesying to you. They are leading you into futility. They speak a vision of their own imagination, not from the mouth of Yahweh.’”

In the same way, so-called Christians will claim that they can teach the biblical message and will seek to lure people to follow them, when these teachers are, in fact, abandoning the apostolic message. Peter will go on to explain that the thrust of their message will appeal to people’s emotions and earthly desires, while ignoring the key element of the cross that the Messiah has died to qualify to be their advocate at the final judgment and to obtain for them mercy and eternal life. They may even mention Jesus and the cross, but their misunderstanding of the significance of his death will, in effect, be a refusal to pay attention to him.

Another clue that Peter is writing to Jewish readers is that he speaks of false prophets among the people (ψευδοπροφήται ἐν τῷ λαῷ), so that he feels that he does not have to name these people specifically as the “Jews” or “Israelites.”

These false prophets were men who claimed that they were explaining God correctly, as though they were speaking authoritatively and justifiably on His behalf, when they had no clear, biblical nor divine evidence to do so. Therefore, because they were not “moved by the Holy Spirit” (v. 21 – ὑπὸ πνεύματος ἁγίου φερόμενοι), they were merely *false* prophets.

Cf. Jeremiah 26, especially vs. 7 & 8, “The priests and the prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah speaking these

words in the house of Yahweh. When Jeremiah finished speaking all that Yahweh had commanded him to speak to all the people, the priests and the prophets and all the people seized him, saying, ‘You must die! Why have you prophesied in the name of Yahweh saying, “This house will be like Shiloh and this city will be desolate, without inhabitant”?’ And all the people gathered about Jeremiah in the house of Yahweh.”

It is key to note that the false prophets of Jeremiah’s day spoke enthusiastically about Yahweh and put great effort into worshipping Him in Jerusalem in the temple. In line with this, all the rest of the Israelites in the southern Kingdom of Judah were outwardly worshipping God and speaking of Him. However, they were in fact engaging in great evil by the prophets’ not correctly understanding God and orally representing Him properly to the people, so that they decided to follow these erroneous spokesmen, rather than thinking clearly about what they were saying. In this way, they, like the false teachers who will be among the Christians to whom Peter is writing, “refused to pay attention to the Owner who bought them,” i.e., to Yahweh.

Thus, Peter claims that, just as there were false prophets among the Jews in OT times who gave the impression that they were speaking on behalf of Yahweh and yet were not, his readers will see the same phenomenon among them. The false prophets of old spoke enthusiastically about God while claiming that the people’s adherence to the Mosaic Covenant and the traditions that had been derived from it was pleasing to God and constituted proper obedience to Him. Likewise, Peter’s readers will find that people will say the same thing among them, to the effect that they portray themselves as being equally apostolic as Peter, James, and John, while professing to follow Yahweh and believe in Jesus as the Messiah.

In addition, based upon other statements in this letter, these false teachers have been exposed to the message of Jesus as the Messiah and have even appeared to embrace it authentically. However, by virtue of their current perspective that is based upon human and not divine ideas, they have now rejected this message and gone back to focusing on the Mosaic Covenant—even while continuing to participate in the Christian community and to proclaim Jesus as the Messiah. These are Judaizers who are Judaizing Jewish believers and not Gentile believers as in Galatians. Also, in this way, they are “refusing to pay attention to the Owner [God, Yahweh] who bought them [with the death of the Messiah].” Just as the ramifications for the OT false prophets were condemnation from God, there will be the eternal kind of condemnation for these false teachers who are operating within the Christian community. These false teachers must also be the same people in whom the characteristics of 1:5-7 do not actually exist, no matter how much they may try to give the appearance of such (cf. 1:9). They are harsh and oppressive, not loving like the apostles. Therefore, they demonstrate their inwardness that destines them for eternal condemnation and not salvation (cf. Galatians 1:8,9 – 1:8). However, even if we or the *angelos* from heaven were to proclaim to you a message of good news that is the opposite of that which we did proclaim to you, let him be eternally condemned. 1:9 As we have said before and now I am saying again, if someone proclaims to you a message that is contrary to what you embraced, let him be condemned).

²⁵ καὶ πολλοὶ ἐξακολούθησουσιν αὐτῶν ταῖς ἀσελείαις δι’ οὓς ἡ ῥόδὸς τῆς ἀληθείας βλασφημηθήσεται – Peter labels the intentions and pursuits of the false teachers who subscribe to an erroneous perspective on the Mosaic Covenant as characterized by *ἀσελία*. Jude 4 uses the word, “For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness (*ἀσελία*) and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ [NAS95].” Thus, the word refers to thinking that one has the moral license to do whatever he wants. These people pursue evil with total abandon. These teachers obviously will regard the true message of Jesus the Messiah as erroneous, thus distorting the ideas in the Bible, while also claiming to be Christians and to be definitely and completely committed to the Mosaic Covenant.

Consequently, the evil that they pursue with total abandon is *religious adherence to the Mosaic Covenant* that may include the same kind of worldly immorality (financial cheating, sexual immorality, etc.) of which the OT prophets accused the Israelites (cf. Jeremiah 23:9ff.), but it does not have to. It could be just a commitment to a religious lifestyle that lacks a proper understanding of God, because these people grab certain ideas from the Bible, using them to promote a kind of Christianity that suits their emotional needs, while then ignoring other ideas in the Bible that would fill out their understanding, but are simply unattractive to them. Thus, their *ἀσελία* is a complete lack of self-restraint when it comes to authentic morality.

However, the real immorality for these Jewish false teachers would be their thinking that they are good enough to make themselves worthy of God’s blessings and even mercy, which is a contradiction in terms. Modern Christians do the same thing by talking about God’s “honoring” their actions that will result in His blessing them. Earned mercy is an oxymoron, biblically and properly speaking, because even the condition for obtaining God’s mercy, changed inwardness and repentance, must be graced and granted by God in order for mercy itself to be graced. Thus, grace through and through is the only ultimate and efficient cause not only of the human condition required to obtain God’s mercy, but also of the divine dispensing of mercy.

In addition, because these false teachers are promoting a false way of understanding Yahweh and the Messiah, they will speak derisively and disrespectfully of the true way of understanding God, because it will not fit with their man-made agenda and intentions for how to teach and follow the Bible. Therefore, in the midst of teaching the Bible, they will actually be rejecting the Bible!! They will refuse to accept certain key ideas of the Bible and will use only those ideas that suit their selfish purposes for creating out of the Bible a religion called “Christianity.” The result will be that those who follow them will commit the same error of speaking disrespectfully of the actual truth of the Bible, even while claiming to teach the Bible.

²⁴ καὶ ἐν πλεονεξία πλαστοῖς λόγοις ὑμᾶς ἐμπορεύσονται, οἷς τὸ κρίμα ἔκταλαι οὐκ ἀργεῖ καὶ ἡ ἀπόλεια αὐτῶν οὐ ἄνυστάζει – Peter indicates that greed is what motivates these false teachers. This may not be greed for money, but it could be greed for applause and approval by man, including greed for power that allows these teachers to manipulate people into approving of them. Πλεον, like πλεον, is the comparative of πολὺς, which means much. Εξία comes from ἔχων. Thus, the word means having more than much, i.e., a desire for more than much, or more than what one either deserves or currently has. The false teachers “sell” their erroneous perspective on the Mosaic Covenant to the Jewish believers, hoping to garner their support and to collect them as followers. They want much more than the applause and support that is actually proper for human spokesmen on behalf of God, who should get all the applause and support. Peter also says that their ideas and statements (λόγοις) about God are man-made. The word he uses is πλαστοῖς, from which we get our word plastic. The statements that these false teachers make about God come from ideas that they shape and mold apart from the true message of the Bible. Thus, their statements serve their own self-interests, as was the case for the false prophets in OT times, but not those of God. For example, Jeremiah 23:16, “Thus says Yahweh of hosts, ‘Do not listen to the words of the prophets who are prophesying to you. They are leading you into futility. They speak a vision of their own imagination, not from the mouth of Yahweh.’” Consequently, God’s justice and destruction are simply waiting patiently for these Jewish rebels of God and of the Jewish Messiah.

²⁵ Εἰ γὰρ ὁ θεὸς ἀγγέλων ἀμαρτησάντων οὐκ ἐφείσατο ἀλλὰ Ἷσειραῖς ζόφου ταρταρώσας παρέδωκεν εἰς κρίσιν Ἷτηρουμένους – Anchor Bible Dictionary, [Dead, Abode of the] “In 2 Pet 2:4 mention is made of casting rebel angels into Tartarus. In classical Greek mythology murky Tartarus was said to be as far below Hades as earth is below the heavens, so much so that an anvil could fall for nine days and nights until it reached it. Tartarus is described as a prison with gates, and it too is personified (Homer Iliad 8.13–16; Hesiod Theog. 713–35).”

Who are these *angeloi*? Assuming that Peter is presenting these examples in chronological order, these would have to be beings who existed prior to Noah and who demonstrated rebellion against God. Are they the Nephilim and “sons of God” (אֱלֹהִים בָּנִים) (οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ) of Genesis 6:1,2,4? Probably not, because it makes the most sense that the “sons of God” were great men and rulers who were seen as their chief god’s proxy, not angels *per se*, because they had children by women of their day. The point of Genesis 6:1,2,4 is that these powerful men saw women as objects to be taken, as many as they could acquire as wives (ἄνθρωποι) (γυναίκας), and used for their own selfish ends. In this way, the “daughters of men” were “good” (καλαί) (καλαί), so that they took “whomever they chose” (ὅποιον ἠέλησαν) (ἀπὸ πασῶν ὧν ἐξελέξαντο).

Perhaps, the *angeloi* were self-proclaimed messengers of God who attempted to explain the nature of reality on the basis of their own rebellious minds and hearts, because they were not “moved by the Holy Spirit” (v. 21 – ὑπὸ πνεύματος ἁγίου φερόμενοι), i.e., OT “prophets,” who lived prior to Noah. However, Peter seems to list all the unbelievers of Noah’s time in v. 5, thus making the latter different from the *angeloi* of v. 4, unless he goes back in time with the second example.

Or, and most likely, the *angeloi* were simply invisible, angelic beings who were rebels against God as Satan, the Adversary, has been. However, because they do not die, they simply were relegated to a location within the created reality where they are being kept for their own final judgment that will result in eternal destruction. The definite inference from this passage in 2 Peter is that these *angeloi* still exist in a prison-like location until the final “judgment” takes place. Is this the same “final” judgment that human beings will experience, or is it simply a judgment-like experience where the *angeloi* will eventually suffer destruction as rebellious human beings will also? It probably does not matter.

The point is that God did not overlook the evil behavior of these rebellious beings, and His intent is to condemn and destroy them eventually.

²⁶ καὶ ἀρχαίου κόσμου οὐκ ἐφείσατο ἀλλὰ ὄγδοον Νῶε δικαιοσύνης κήρυκα ἐφύλαξεν κατακλυσμὸν ἑκόσμῳ ἀσεβῶν ἐπάξας – In chronological order, Peter refers to another incident in the past in OT history where God dealt with rebellious people while also rescuing those who were inwardly changed and authentic believers in God. In this case, God saved Noah and his family from the flood that destroyed the rest of mankind who were evil and refused to obey God by repenting and pursuing morality (Genesis 6-9).

²⁷ καὶ πόλεις Σοδόμων καὶ Γομόρρας τεφρώσας [καταστροφῇ] κατέκρινεν ὑπόδειγμα μελλόντων ἄσεβ[ε]σιν τεθεικώς – Again in chronological order, Peter refers to a third event in OT history whereby a minority of folks escaped the destruction that God brought on those who had rejected Him as their God. In this case, it was Lot, Abraham’s nephew, along with the rest of his family, who were spared physical death when God rained fire and brimstone down on the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah along the Dead Sea (cf. Genesis 19).

Peter says that God was using His treatment of the evil people of Sodom and Gomorrah as proof of His justice that will extend to anyone else future to these people, if they continue in their rebellion against God like those in these two cities. Nevertheless, God will also rescue from His condemnation those who have authentic belief in Him. These two responses to people, condemnation and salvation, are His pattern.

cf. Jeremiah 23:14 - ...All of them have become to Me like Sodom and her inhabitants like Gomorrah.

Therefore, indeed, these OT stories are clear and sufficient evidence of God's justice and should serve as adequate examples (υπόδειγμα) for all future generations of Jews and Gentiles to warn them away from false ideas and disobeying God.

²⁸ καὶ δίκαιον Λὼτ καταπονούμενον ὑπὸ τῆς τῶν ἀθέσμων ἐν ἀσελγείᾳ ἀναστροφῆς ἐρρύσατο – See comments above regarding ἀσελγείᾳ in 2:2. Lot felt the effect of being surrounded by people who had no compunction about behaving in an openly immoral manner in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Indeed, he felt beat down, oppressed, and tyrannized (καταπονούμενον) emotionally and psychologically to the point of being worn out by the arrogance and proliferation of the evil that surrounded him. Perhaps, Lot even felt tempted to engage in the evil of his day because of his own moral depravity. Thus, his struggle was not only with the immorality outside of him but also with the immorality inside of him.

Here δίκαιον, along with δίκαιος and δικαίαν in the next verse, refer to Lot's being correctly oriented towards God inwardly, such that he had a desire for biblical, moral goodness instead of evil, in spite of his own moral depravity. In other words, he was truly a genuinely, divinely changed man who had authentic belief. In the same way, the ἀδίκους of v. 9 are those who remain oriented away from God in the midst of their moral depravity.

²⁹ βλέμματι γὰρ καὶ ἀκοῇ ὁ δίκαιος ἐγκατοικῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς ἡμέραν ἐξ ἡμέρας ψυχὴν δικαίαν ἀνόμοις ἔργοις ἐβασάνιζεν – See notes in previous verse.

³⁰ οἶδεν κύριος εὐσεβεῖς ἐκ ἑπειρασμοῦ ῥύεσθαι, ἀδίκους δὲ εἰς ἡμέραν κρίσεως κολαζομένους τηρεῖν – Peter puts the responsibility for the outcome of people's lives in response to the evil around them and in them squarely on the shoulders of God—ultimately. It is He who knows how to make people survive the temptation towards evil and the testing of their belief when they persistently encounter the unpleasant evil surrounding them by causing them to persevere in their belief, and it is He who knows how to make people continue in their rebellion against Him with the final result that He punishes them with eternal destruction.

Thus, this verse is one of the most encouraging in the Bible, if a person adequately understands the depth of his own moral depravity and human susceptibility to abandon belief in God in the midst of the various pressures of life here on earth to give up embracing God as one's ultimate desire. For example, in the midst of intense pain, a person will naturally want immediate relief from the pain rather than future escape from God's eternal condemnation. In the midst of intense immoral temptation, a person will want immediate satisfaction of the immoral impulse rather than future escape from God's eternal condemnation. In the midst of unpleasant immorality and lack of moral self-restraint, a person will think about giving up on God who has promised relief from this unpleasantness and discomfort—because it feels just too far off, perhaps.

³¹ μάλιστα δὲ τοὺς ὀπίσω σαρκῶς ἐν ἑπιθυμίᾳ ἑμιασμοῦ πορευομένους, καὶ κυριότητος καταφρονούντας, τολμητὰ ἀυθάδεις, ἡ δόξα οὐ τρέμουσιν βλασφημοῦντες – Peter describes the false teachers as men who are merely following their natural born moral rebellion against God that comprises a fundamental desire for that which is evil. In addition, they are completely ignoring the clear authority and right that God, His Messiah, and the apostles have to correct and instruct them in their understanding of reality.

These false teachers should be shaking in their boots whenever they reject the truth of God which He has revealed through Jesus the Messiah and through his apostles such as Peter, James, and John, who personally heard God speak on the Mt. of Transfiguration. They think that they are talking respectfully and correctly about “majestic things,” i.e., of God, but, in fact, they are being insolent and insubordinate towards God. They are only pretending to be good, when they are committed to evil.

³² ὅπου ἄγγελοι ἰσχυροὶ καὶ δυνάμει μείζονες ὄντες οὐ φέρουσιν κατ' αὐτῶν ἑπαρὰ κυρίου βλάσφημον κρίσιν – Again, we have more information in this statement about Peter's cosmology. There are invisible beings, *angeloι*, who have a kind of access to God such that they could go before Him and appeal to Him to deal immediately with these false teachers who are rebels against God. The inference is that, instead, these *angeloι* are waiting patiently for God's final judgment.

Peter is also saying that these invisible beings are, in some sense, more powerful than human beings, which seems to give them to right to go before God and express their opinions about these rebellious people.

³³ Οὗτοι δὲ ὡς ἄλογα ζῶα ἑγεννημένα φυσικὰ εἰς ἄλωσιν καὶ φθορὰν ἐν οἷς ἀγνοοῦσιν βλασφημοῦντες, ἐν τῇ φθορᾷ αὐτῶν καὶ φθορήσονται – Peter indicates that human rebellion against God causes people to act like animals who have no moral compass to speak of and who behave simply on the basis of their instincts and physical desires, except, in the case of human beings, their instincts and desires are of a rebellious quality with respect to God. Animals cannot weigh the moral quality of their choices. If they desire to eat, they pursue eating, regardless of the means and consequences by which they go about fulfilling their desire. If they desire to have sex, they pursue having sex, regardless of the means and consequences by which they go about fulfilling their desire. If they desire to get from point A to point B, they pursue making the journey, regardless of the means and consequences by which they go about fulfilling their desire.

People, who are committed to rebelling against God, are no different in their seeking to fulfill their desires. The means and consequences of their actions, especially the eternal consequences, are of no concern to them. The end justifies the means.

Peter also indicates that the thinking and behavior of these rebellious people are nothing less than irrational (ἄλογα). Their thinking and actions defy logic, when the truth of God and His justice and mercy are taken into account. In other

words, it makes no sense that people would pursue immorality in the light of who God is and what He threatens, which is His justice, of which Paul tells us in Romans 1 everyone is aware.

Peter also states that these irrationally thinking individuals have been born in line with the natural order of things for animals, who are appropriately hunted and killed by man, typically for food. However, these irrational, human rebels against God will be hunted by God and killed by Him. This is to say that God will basically scour the earth looking for them and will destroy them once He finds them. As Peter says in 1 Peter 2:8, “to [this end] they were appointed.” Peter also indicates that their statements about reality constitute a total disrespect for truth. In his day and among his readers, these are people who speak confidently about the importance of following the Mosaic Covenant, but they basically are intellectual morons while claiming to be so smart.

The outcome of these people’s lives as human beings motivated to think and speak irrationally will be a disappearance of their very existence when God destroys them for their commitment to immorality and evil.

³⁴ ἀδικούμενοι μισθὸν ἀδικίας, ἡδονὴν ἠγοούμενοι τὴν ἐν ἡμέρᾳ τρυφῆν, σπῖλοι καὶ μῶμοι ἐντρυφῶντες ἐν ταῖς ῥάπαις αὐτῶν συνευωχούμενοι ὑμῖν – κομιομενοι N² A C 5. 33. 81. 307. 436. 442. 642. 1448. 1611. 1735. 1739. 2344. 2492 Byz latt sy^h co^l txt P⁷² N* B P Ψ 1175. 1243. 1852 sy^{ph} l – While ἀδικούμενοι (= suffering wrong) gets to basically the same thing, κομιομενοι makes more sense, i.e., that unbelievers receive the proper wage of their evil, which is destruction.

The first present participle κομιομενοι most likely follows the sense of the previous future tense verb φθαρήσονται. Thus Peter is saying that these people, who are abject rebels against God, will be paid an appropriate wage for their moral depravity—God’s justice and being eternally destroyed, even while they consider it a delightful aspect of human life that they can respond to their physical desires and do whatever they want to do to satisfy and fulfill them—all in the name of God and Jesus as the Messiah.

In Titus 3:3, Paul lists ἡδονή as one of the vices which even he was pursuing as a committed, religious Jew. Thus, it refers to basic human pleasures that serve people in their rebellion against God, whether non-religious or religious pleasures. James mentions these as the source of conflicts between people, probably when the pursuit of satisfying the desires that they feel collide, so that each person will attempt to hinder the other in reaching his goals. In Luke 7:25, Jesus uses τρυφή to refer to the luxury of the wealthy, i.e., their living in comfort as a result of their self-indulgence. Here, Peter is referring to Jewish false teachers who consider it a great comfort to pursue satisfying their human religious desires in rebellion against God.

Looking at other uses of συνευωχέομαι, it could mean simply spending time with others, i.e., hanging out with them. This makes sense unless Peter is talking specifically about some kind of kosher meals that Jews had together. One might think that these people who reject truth would shun those who embrace truth. However, Peter claims that they are right there in the midst of authentic believers, but they are clearly interpreting the opportunity to be together differently. The believers view their time together as genuine acts of worship towards Yahweh and His Messiah. The non-believers view their corporate gatherings as acts of worship towards Yahweh, but, because their thinking is irrational as Peter has explained, their actions bear no authentic spiritual quality. Again, they are like spiritually incapable and logically challenged animals.

³⁵ ὀφθαλμοὺς ἔχοντες ῥμεστοὺς μοιχαλίδος καὶ ἀκαταπαύστους ἀμαρτίας, δελεάζοντες ψυχὰς ἀστηρίκτους, καρδίαν γεγυμνασμένην πλεονεξίας ἔχοντες, κατάρως τέκνα – Peter refers to the *spiritual* adultery of the false teachers who are claiming that the Mosaic Covenant is more important than the Messiah. Their inner “eyes” so to speak look to commit evil by rejecting the truth of the NT message of the Messiah. They never stop pursuing evil in the midst of hoping to win co-rebels to their cause by encouraging people who are not wholly established in the apostolic message to believe in the nature of reality that has its focus on the Mosaic Covenant and not on Jesus. Cf. Ezekiel 16:38 – Thus I will judge you [rebellious Israelites] like women who commit adultery (תִּישָׁן זְנָנִים) (ἐκδικήσει μοιχαλίδος) or shed blood are judged; and I will bring on you the blood of wrath and jealousy. Cf. Ezekiel 23:45 – But they, righteous men, will judge them with the judgment of adulteresses (תִּישָׁן זְנָנִים) (ἐκδικήσει μοιχαλίδος) and with the judgment of women who shed blood, because they are adulteresses and blood is on their hands.

The commitment to moral depravity of these false teachers results in their being unfaithful to God, longing constantly to pursue immorality, even religious immorality, and seeking to have others join them in their false worship of God. This will satisfy their greed for human approval, but it will also result in their being judged as rebels by God and receiving the appropriate consequence of eternal destruction. Thus, they stand to be cursed and not blessed by God.

³⁶ καταλείποντες εὐθεῖαν ὁδὸν ἐπλανήθησαν, ἐξακολουθήσαντες τῇ ὁδῷ τοῦ Βαλαάμ τοῦ ῥβοσῶρ, ὃς μισθὸν ἀδικίας ῥγήαπσεν – Rather than having walked down the road of truth, especially the apostolic truth, which Peter calls straight because of its moral boundaries, keeping immorality outside the road, these teachers of false ideas wander constantly into the rough along the road that is characterized by evil, just as the OT false prophet Balaam did in Numbers 22-24. He was enticed by the wealth that he would receive from Balak, who hired him to curse the Israelites. But God stopped him on his way to meet Balak and convinced him to say only what He told him. Otherwise, he would have died.

³⁷ ἔλεγγιν δὲ ἔσχεν ἰδίας παρανομίας ὑποζύγιον ἄφωνον ἐν ἀνθρώπου φωνῇ φεγγζάμενον ἐκόλυσεν τὴν τοῦ προφήτου παραφρονίαν – God miraculously communicated to Balaam through a donkey when he was headed towards destruction. Peter’s implication is that only a miracle of God can change these false teachers so that they appropriately

believe and pursue the truth of the apostolic message. Otherwise, they will continue to spew false ideas in line with their immoral passions as he goes on to explain in vs. 17-19.

By using the word *παρὰφροσύνη* = insanity, Peter is indicating just how bizarre it is for any human being to oppose God.

³⁸ οὗτοι εἰσιν πηγαὶ ἄνυδροι καὶ ὀμίχλαι ὑπὸ λαίλαπος ἐλαυνόμεναι, οἷς ὁ ζόφος τοῦ σκοτούς τ' τετήρηται – Peter uses these metaphors to highlight the fact that people who are promoting lies in regard to reality are both empty of good ideas and headed for big trouble. First, they are “waterless springs.” They think that they provide a satisfying drink of good ideas to those who listen to them, but their ideas are basically without content, because they are false. They are “dark clouds in the sky” that are being driven along by the winds of a storm. In this case, the storm is the full force of evil in the world that relentlessly assaults the minds and emotions of all human beings. However, the end result for these people will be the darkness of destruction and annihilation by God.

³⁹ ὑπέρογκα γὰρ ματαιότητος φθεγγόμενοι δελεάζουσιν ἐν ἐπιθυμίαις σαρκὸς ἄσελγείαις τοὺς ὀλίγως [ῥῶτως] ἄποφεύγοντας τοὺς ἐν πλάνῃ ἀναστρεφόμενους – ὀλίγως ⁷² ² A B Ψ 33. 436 latt? sy? co? ἰ ολίγον 2344 latt? sy? co? ἰ lxt ⁸* C P 048. 5. 81. 307. 442. 642. 1175. 1243. 1448. 1611. 1735. 1739. 1852. 2492 Byz |

“boastful things...purpose” = a pursuit of the Mosaic Covenant from a legalistic perspective? Most likely. Peter says that these people who are committed to evil right in the midst of authentic Jewish believers constantly encourage in one way or another the believers to abandon the truth of Jesus as the Messiah, and the fact of the matter is that the believers in a sense barely avoid being swallowed up by the attractiveness of their professional pleadings. These false teachers, who are driven by their own strong immoral desires that result in actions that are completely outside the boundaries of God’s moral commandments, are very persuasive, and the implication is that only a clear grasp of the biblical and apostolic message will prevent someone from concluding that their ideas are true. Because of what Peter has already argued in 2:9, authentic believers “barely” escape being enticed into rejecting truth by virtue of God’s faithfulness to them to cause them to persevere in their belief so as to remain qualified for His eternal mercy and the outcome, eternal life.

⁴⁰ ἐλευθερίαν αὐτοῖς ἐπαγγελλόμενοι, αὐτοὶ δοῦλοι ὑπάρχοντες τῆς φθορᾶς ᾧ γὰρ τις ἤττηται, τούτω τ' δεδούλωται – To be coherent with the phrase “slaves of destruction,” Peter means “freedom from condemnation and destruction” by the word *ἐλευθερίαν*. The false Jewish teachers are promising the Jewish believers in Jesus the Messiah freedom from God’s condemnation by promoting merely the idea of obeying the Mosaic Covenant. However, Peter says that these false teachers are going to be overcome by God’s destroying them, because it is to this that they are chained like slaves because of their innate rebellion against God, from which they have not escaped. Maybe they are accepting to a degree that Jesus is a king. But they are missing the important point of his being their only appropriate advocate for God’s mercy. They have become enslaved by the moral depravity that has overcome them and led them to reject the truth, so that they are promoting false ideas, lies about the nature of reality.

⁴¹ εἰ γὰρ ἀποφυγόντες τὰ μιάσματα τοῦ κόσμου ἐν ἐπιγνώσει τοῦ κυρίου [ἡμῶν] καὶ σωτήρος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, τούτοις δὲ πάλιν ἐπιπλακέντες ἤττωνται, γέγονεν αὐτοῖς τὰ ἔσχατα χειρόνα τῶν πρώτων – Peter intimates that the false teachers had at one time engaged the ideas of Jesus as the Messiah and even appeared to believe them as true, thus also appearing to have defeated the ideas and lies of the world in their own minds and actions. However, they have become overcome and defeated by these false ideas so that they have returned to promoting and pursuing only the Mosaic Covenant at the expense of Jesus’ full messiahship.

Peter says that the result is that, by going back to raw rebellion against God, they have made matters worse for themselves. How? Probably Peter means that, on an existential level, they have made it even more difficult for themselves to see clearly the truth and to embrace it with authentic belief.

⁴² κρεῖττον γὰρ ἦν αὐτοῖς μὴ ἐπεγνωκέναι τὴν ὁδὸν τῆς δικαιοσύνης ἢ ἐπιγνοῦσιν ὑποστρέψαι ἐκ τῆς παραδοθείσης αὐτοῖς ἀγίας ἐντολῆς – This sounds like Hebrews 6:4-6 – 6:4 It is impossible to renew again to repentance those who were once enlightened, such that they have tasted of the gift of heaven, have become partners with the Holy Spirit, 6:5 and have tasted of the good message of God, specifically the significant consequences of it with respect to the coming age, 6:6 and have fallen away, in so far as they crucify again for themselves the Son of God and disgrace him publicly.

The idea that Peter seems to be setting forth is, from a human standpoint, a person is more likely to embrace the biblical message if he has not encountered it before than if he has encountered it and then turned away from it by distorting it.

⁴³ συμβέβηκεν τ' αὐτοῖς τὸ τῆς ἀληθοῦς παροιμίας κύων ἐπιστρέψας ἐπὶ τὸ ἴδιον ἐξέραμα, καὶ ὅς λουσαμένη εἰς κύλισμὸν βορβόρου – cf. Proverbs 26:11 – Like a dog that returns to its vomit (יִשְׁבֹּרֵב עַל־בִּרְבָּרָהּ) (ὡσπερ κύων ὅταν ἐπέλθῃ ἐπὶ τὸν ἑαυτοῦ ἔμετον) is a fool who repeats his folly.

The point of these parables—if a person is animal-like instead of truly human, then he will not be able to refrain from doing really stupid things in comparison to following the biblical message. Instead of staying away from lies that he has apparently rejected, he will ingest them all over again. Instead of staying away from dirty ideas that he has apparently been cleansed of, he will immerse himself in them all over again. Thus, these proverbs have a definite negative connotation. An unbeliever who hears the truth and appears to believe it, but who then gives up the truth is like an animal either who eats his own vomit, thus liking something that ought to be repulsive, or who prefers being covered with mud above being clean, thus, again, liking something which he ought to avoid.

⁴⁴ Ταύτην ἤδη, ἀγαπητοί, δευτέραν ὁμῖν γράφω ἐπιστολήν, ἐν αἷς διεγείρω ἴμῶν ἐν ὑπομνήσει τὴν εἰλικρινῆ διάνοιαν – While “letter” (ἐπιστολήν) is singular, the relative pronoun after “in,” i.e., “which” (ἐν αἷς) is plural, indicating that Peter is referring in the relative clause “in which I am waking up...reminder” to both the letters that he wrote to these Jewish readers. Thus, it is appropriate to translate the relative pronoun “which” (αἷς) with the word “both.” However, if I am right that 1 Peter is written to Gentiles and 2 Peter is written to Jews, then 1 Peter is not the letter which is included in the relative pronoun “which” (αἷς). Therefore, we do not have the first letter. Nevertheless, if the letter of Paul to these Jews was Hebrews, then we can at least conclude that Peter is revealing even more of the situation in this Jewish community, that they have supposed “Christians” right in their midst who are encouraging them to pay more attention to the Mosaic Covenant and its animal sacrifices than to Jesus as the Messiah and the only sacrifice/High Priest that God will accept for granting eternal mercy to morally depraved human beings. Thus, the persecution to which Paul alludes in Hebrews is definitely coming from the outside, but Peter is talking about pressure from inside their own gathering of believers, i.e., from false teachers who are insistent on preserving the religiosity of the community at the expense of actually pursuing the truth of the Messiah.

Of course, this is not at all different from so-called Christian churches who are more insistent on maintaining their standing in the church culture by promoting their programs, traditional doctrines, religious ceremonies, status within the Christian world, etc., rather than genuinely being concerned about the biblical message, even while claiming to be all about studying and teaching the Bible.

⁴⁵ μνησθῆναι τῶν προειρημένων ῥημάτων ὑπὸ τῶν ἀγίων προφητῶν καὶ τῆς τῶν ἀποστόλων ἴμῶν ἐντολῆς τοῦ κυρίου καὶ σωτήρος – In 2:1, Peter referred to false prophets among the OT Israelites. While sometimes the word prophet is used to refer to accurate NT spokesmen, who proclaimed the gospel of Jesus as the Messiah alongside the apostles, it would seem here that Peter is talking about OT prophets who proclaimed God’s message about the coming Messiah. In addition to them, Peter is referring to the truth as Jesus himself presented it to his apostles, who then passed it on to others. Peter refers specifically to “your apostles,” the three men, Peter, James, and John, who presented the NT information to these readers (cf. 1:18-21). All this information can be placed under the label the apostolic message, which Peter indicates with the word ἐντολῆς = commandment typically. The apostolic message is God’s commandment to humanity to repent and seek His eternal mercy. It is this that Peter wants to urge his readers to remember.

⁴⁶ τοῦτο πρῶτον γινώσκοντες ὅτι ἐλεύσονται ἐπ’ ἐσχάτων τῶν ἡμερῶν [ἐν] ἐμπαίγμονῃ ἐμπαίκαται κατὰ τὰς ἰδίας ἐπιθυμίας αὐτῶν πορευόμενοι – After encouraging his readers to remember certain truths that he mentioned in chapters 1 & 2, Peter now turns towards the future and “first” wants these Christians to remember that, as the time draws near for Jesus to return, people will ridicule the Bible and God’s truth. Most likely, Peter’s perspective is not global but confined to the Middle East as found even in the OT prophets, e.g., Daniel. Nevertheless, we should not be surprised if there is a worldwide mocking of Christianity, especially as the appearance of the Man of Lawlessness mentioned by Paul in 2 Thessalonians approaches. He will be the ultimate scoffer of truth, so that people who support him will ridicule Christianity similarly. It certainly seems that we are seeing such an attitude growing towards Christianity and Christians in our own day.

⁴⁷ καὶ λέγοντες· ποῦ ἐστὶν ἡ ἐπαγγελία τῆς παρουσίας αὐτοῦ; ἄφ’ ἧς γὰρ οἱ πατέρες ἔκοιμήθησαν, πάντα οὕτως διαμένει ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς κτίσεως – I do not think that Peter is describing the exact “theology” of the ridiculers as much as he is simply alluding to their overall mentality that looks at the world and comes to the conclusion that things have been occurring pretty much as they are for a long, long time, and they will continue to do so for a long, long time. Therefore, if “God,” whoever He might be and if He actually exists as the Bible says that He does, has “promised” to cause His Messiah to appear, He must have forgotten to do so, which means it probably is never going to happen. As a result, the “fathers’ falling asleep” is a reference to people who died a long time ago and not a reference to Jewish OT patriarchs such as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. In addition, “the beginning of the creation” is a reference to these scoffers’ considering the “creation,” i.e., the whole cosmos, to have been made by warring gods or to have existed from eternity past. In other words, the present reality’s beginning may or may not have involved an actual act of creation. Perhaps, as some philosophers believed, the cosmos has always existed and is eternal. Or, perhaps it came into existence through the actions of a god, e.g., the Babylonian god Marduk’s killing the goddess Tiamat and forming the heavens and the earth out of her dead body.

In either case, this supposed quote identifies the people who are making fun of the idea of God’s sending His Messiah as Gentile unbelievers and not as the same people in chapter 2 who are Jewish false teachers. Certainly, the false teachers would most likely embrace the notion of a coming Messiah and not ridicule it, even as they focus on the Mosaic Covenant for asserting their Jewishness. Consequently, Peter is identifying what he would consider to be the future philosophical and theological climate within the Roman Empire as simply rejecting the biblical God who is directing the story of the universe towards its definite culmination of the establishment of the eternal Davidic Kingdom. Like Paul, Peter had a hunch that Jesus was returning sooner than he has. This is not make him wrong in his theology, just simply very expectant of this major event in world history.

⁴⁸ Λανθάνει γὰρ αὐτοὺς τοῦτο θέλοντας ὅτι οὐρανοὶ ἦσαν ἔκπαλαι καὶ γῆ ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ δι’ ὕδατος ἑσυνεστῶσα τῷ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγῳ – Peter is saying that the mockers, who want to believe that the overall existence of things never changes, are also unwilling to take into account the obvious fact that it was a long time between God’s bringing the creation into existence as described by Moses in Genesis 1 and His destroying the earth by flooding it with water during the time of Noah as described in Genesis 6-9. By rejecting the transcendent Creator, they also fail to take into

account that these events occurred within the story that God has formulated and is telling by means of cosmic history. Therefore, long times seem to be God's pattern, or at least His right, and everything happens according to the story that God continues to imagine into existence. In other words, coming to grips with what it means for there to be a transcendent Creator whose action of making His story exist is essential for understanding and living in reality. People who ignore God even after He has demonstrated His justice with events such as the flood will suffer His eternal judgment and destruction.

⁴⁹ δι' ὧν [ὄν] ὁ τότε κόσμος ὕδατι κατακλυσθεὶς ἀπόλετο – The variant ὄν makes a lot more sense—that Peter is referring to the λόγος of God, i.e. the story that He imagines into existence. Thus, later, God destroyed the earth with the flood of Genesis 6-9 during the time of Noah. In this way, the earthly setup of human existence went through a radical transition, not that people were any different after the flood, because they all were and are still morally depraved, but an explicit demonstration of God's wrath, judgment, and destruction had now been made. In the light of this clear demonstration, people should take God's angry and destructive response to immorality just that much more seriously. However, Peter is saying that they did and do not. Instead, they mock God and His truth. But God will still have the last say in the matter.

⁵⁰ οἱ δὲ νῦν οὐρανοὶ καὶ ἡ γῆ τῷ αὐτῷ λόγῳ τεθησαυρισμένοι εἰσὶν ἑπτατηρούμενοι εἰς ἡμέραν κρίσεως καὶ ἀπολείας τῶν ἀσεβῶν ἀνθρώπων –

† αὐτου N C 5. 307. 436. 442^c. 642. 1243. 1448. 1735. 2492 Byz sy cv l

Most Bibles consider the αὐτῷ to be correct and translate it as “same.” This makes sense—that Peter is referring to the “same story” in which the events of the flood occurred. Thus, within the same story, the events of the final judgment and destruction of the present realm will occur—but this time, with the destructive force of fire, not water, and in regard to the entire creation, not just the earth. The first explicit demonstration of God's wrath, judgment, and destruction involved only the earth. The next and last demonstration will include both the heavens and the earth. In other words, God will destroy this entire creation.

In the light of the long time between God's bringing the creation into existence and destroying the earth with its human life with a flood of water during the time of Noah, Peter emphasizes that God's plan to destroy the entire present creation with fire will still happen. It is as though the present earth and its setup, along with the heavens, are being stored in a safe place for one last act of destruction on God's part. And God will accomplish this last and final destruction with fire, not water. In addition, like God's eliminating rebellious human beings from the earth in Noah's time, He will bring about one last assessment of humanity and will destroy those who have remained committed to rejecting Him. The implication is, though, that, just as God preserved certain, chosen human beings through the judgment of the flood, He will do the same through the judgment of the fire.

⁵¹ Ἐν δὲ τούτῳ μὴ λανθανέτω ὑμᾶς, ἀγαπητοί, ὅτι μία ἡμέρα παρὰ κυρίῳ ὡς χίλια ἔτη καὶ χίλια ἔτη ὡς ἡμέρα μία – While all this that he has been talking about is something that the scoffing unbelievers are unwilling to recognize, Peter wants to make sure the recipients of this letter are willing to recognize certain important truths about the apparent “delay” between the revealing of the Messiah at his first coming and his appearance at his second coming. He encourages them to understand that length of time is not an impediment to God with respect to His keeping His promises, including the one of the Messiah's return. While unbelievers might choose to let certain aspects of reality escape their notice, Peter knows that people who have been inwardly changed by God will not ignore that fact that He is the transcendent storyteller of the history of the entire creation. Therefore, whenever it suits Him to cause something to happen within the story, He brings it about. If the length of time between it and some other event related to it is one day or a thousand years, this does not affect God's ability to cause it to occur. All that matters is God's desire to write the event into the story at the particular moment that He chooses.

⁵² οὐ βραδύνει ὁ κύριος τῆς ἐπαγγελίας, ὡς τινες βραδύτητα ἠγοῦνται, ἀλλὰ μακροθυμεῖ εἰς ὑμᾶς, μὴ βουλόμενός τις ἀπολέσθαι ἀλλὰ πάντας εἰς μετάνοιαν χωρῆσαι –

† εἰς ημας 307. 442. 642. 2492 Byz † δι υμας N A Ψ 5. 33. 436. 1611. 1852 latt sy sa † txt p⁷² B C P 048^{vid}. 81. 1175. 1243. 1448. 1735. 1739. 2344

It makes sense to treat this statement by Peter as a general comment about God's plans for humanity and, therefore, to conclude that the “to us” (εἰς ημας) is the correct reading. The apparent delay in the return of the Messiah is because of God's having chosen certain human beings to be rescued from his wrath and destruction, and some of these human beings have not yet become believers. Therefore, God is waiting until all whom He has chosen achieve authentic belief and repentance before He destroys the world with fire. As a result, also, it makes sense to conclude that the variant εἰς ημας is the correct reading.

cf. 2 Thessalonians 1:5ff. – “[The Thessalonians' belief in the midst of persecution and suffering] is proof of God's morally perfect judgment, so that you may be considered worthy of the Kingdom of God, for which you are indeed suffering...” Paul expresses a similar perspective that God's patiently taking people of authentic belief through difficult times is intended to mature their belief and commitment to the biblical truth, thus making it clear that He will rescue eternally those who persevere in their belief and will destroy eternally those who remain steadfast in their rejection of the biblical message.

Peter includes himself in the group of people who are marked for salvation by God and towards whom God is being patient as He matures their belief and demonstrates its authenticity.

⁵³ Ἦξει δὲ ἡμέρα κυρίου ὡς κλέπτῃς, ἐν ἧ ὁ οὐρανοὶ ῥοιζηδὸν παρελεύσονται στοιχεῖα δὲ καυσούμενα

λυθήσεται καὶ γῆ καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ ἔργα τ [ουχ] εὐρεθήσεται –
'ευρεθησεται N B P 1175. 1448. 1739^{ist}. 1852 sy^{ph mss txt} sy^{hmg} ; ευρεθησεται λυομενα p⁷² ; αφανισθησονται C ; κατακαησεται
A 048. 33. 81. 307. 436. 442. 642. 1611. 1739^{vl}. 2344 Byz vg^{cl} sy^{ph mss vl} sy^h ; Cyr ; κατακαησονται 5. 1243. 1735. 2492 ; txt sy^{ph mss}
sa cv^{vid}—

With all the possible variants, it makes the most sense that Peter is simply saying that the whole creation is going to disappear when God destroys it with fire at the Day of the Lord. However, Peter is referring to the very end of the “Day of the Lord,” because we know from other passages, including Revelation, that it will involve Jesus’ setting up his earthly kingdom in Jerusalem for a period of time called the millenium, and it will also involve the Jews’ living on the land of Israel and Gentile’s living in their countries during the millenium. Thus, Peter’s emphasis is to point to the final destruction of unbelievers at the end of the present realm in order to help the Christians to whom he is writing grab onto the promise from God of their salvation as seen in 3:11 ff.

The “works in it,” i.e., in the earth, refer to all that God is producing within the context of the present earth as a result of the story that He formulated in eternity past. All of this will disappear, never to be seen again. And the inference is that, anybody who is not willing to get on board with the temporary nature of this supposed eternal cosmos will be confronted with God’s judgment, wrath, and destruction.

⁵⁴ Τούτων οὕτως πάντων λυομένων ποταποὺς δεῖ ὑπάρχειν [ὕμᾱς] ἐν ἀγίαις ἀναστροφαῖς καὶ εὐσεβείαις –
ε υμας υπαρχειν 642 ; υπαρχειν ημας N* 5 ; υπαρχειν p⁷² .^{74vid} B 1175 vg^{ms} ; παρεχειν εαυτους 1243

As above, there is the strong possibility that Peter is referring to “us” and not just “you,” thus including himself and the apostles in the thought that people need to behave in a particular way if they desire to be saved from God’s destructive actions at the end of the present realm. To read “us” (ημας) makes more sense in the light of his speaking about “us” in 2:9.

⁵⁵ προσδοκῶντας καὶ σπεύδοντας τὴν παρουσίαν τῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡμέρας δι’ ἣν οὐρανοὶ πυρούμενοι λυθήσονται καὶ στοιχεῖα καθυστερούμενα ἴσθησονται – In the light of ημας making more sense in the previous verse, translating the nominative plural accusative participles with “we” instead of “you” is better. Thus, Peter is saying that both the apostles and their believing listeners are both waiting for (προσδοκῶντας) and hastening (σπεύδοντας) the event called the Day of Lord, which will spell the end of the present realm when God uses fire to destroy it.

So Peter asks the question as to what kind of people believers should be in the middle of demonstrating their respect for God in their lives.

⁵⁶ καινοὺς δὲ οὐρανοὺς καὶ γῆν καινὴν κατὰ τὸ ἐπάγγελμα αὐτοῦ προσδοκῶμεν, ἐν οἷς δικαιοσύνη κατοικεῖ –
The new and eternal reality that God will create after He destroys the present one will be characterized not by immorality, moral rebellion, and death as this one has been, but by moral perfection and life. It is this future realm for which Peter and all other fellow believers are waiting expectantly, implying that they are not counting on the present realm to bring much satisfaction and pleasure.

In addition, the new morally perfect reality is part of God’s promise, just as much as the return of the Messiah is.

Is. 65:17 “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth (וַיִּבְרָא יְהוָה שָׁמַיִם נְיָרִים וְאֶרֶץ נְיָרָה בְּיָמֵי מֶלֶךְ דָּוִד) (ἔσται γὰρ ὁ οὐρανὸς καινὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ καινὴ), and the former things will not be remembered or come to mind.

⁵⁷ Διό, ἀγαπητοί, ταῦτα προσδοκῶντες σπουδάσατε ἄσπιλοι καὶ ἀμόμητοι αὐτῷ εὐρεθῆναι ἐν εἰρήνῃ – Now, Peter answers the question that he asked in vs. 11 & 12. The apostles and fellow believers should be people of the future, expected shalom, which means that they should pursue moral goodness with authentic belief. This is what Peter means by “spotless and without blemish” (ἄσπιλοι καὶ ἀμόμητοι), where the second word is an OT term that refers to the “perfection” of the animal being sacrificed by a Jew and to the Jew who has biblical inwardness as demonstrated by his willingness to adhere to the ceremonial and sacrificial commandments of the Mosaic Covenant. For example,

Ex. 29:1 “Now this is what you shall do to them to consecrate them to minister as priests to Me—take one young bull and two rams without blemish (בְּיָמֵי) (ἄμώμους)... [The animals are not “perfect” in the sense that there is absolutely nothing about them that could be considered a flaw, but they certainly appear good and healthy, thus reflecting the Jew’s willingness to present to God the best of what is available.]

Psa. 19:13 Also keep back Your servant from presumptuous sins (מִפְּרִיֵּשׁוֹת) (ἀπὸ ἀλλοτριῶν). Let them not rule over me. Then I will be blameless (בְּיָמֵי from בְּיָמֵי) (ἄμωμος), and I shall be acquitted of great transgression. [David in Psalm 19 cannot be saying that he is morally perfect. Indeed, in this one verse he admits that he is guilty of great immorality. Therefore, his blamelessness is his willingness to be humble and repentant before God in order to gain His mercy.]

As a result, this exhortation by Peter is like Paul’s in 1 Thessalonians 5:19, “Do not cause the Spirit to stop functioning.” Even in the light of God’s being the transcendent storyteller who is causing human history to be exactly as He has planned it, Peter (and Paul) would have his (their) readers make every human effort to choose to do that which is right according to the apostolic message. This is what kind of people they should be as they wait for the Day of the Lord which will contain Jesus’ return and the eventual destruction of the present realm.

⁵⁸ καὶ τὴν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν μακροθυμίαν σωτηρίαν ἠγείσαθε, καθὼς καὶ ὁ ἀγαπητὸς ἡμῶν ἀδελφὸς Παῦλος κατὰ τὴν δοθεῖσαν αὐτῷ σοφίαν ἔγραψεν ὑμῖν – There is one word that defines and describes the “delay” of God and the “patience of God” in bringing about the end of the world—salvation (σωτηρίαν)! Everything that has been occurring since Peter’s day and will occur until the present realm ends when God destroys it with fire is for the purpose of His rescuing those whom He has designated for eternal salvation. This includes not only changing people inwardly, so that

they spiritually transition from being abject rebels against God to committed believers in the Messiah, but also keeping them changed inwardly and committed to receiving the promise of eternal salvation.

Peter refers to a letter that the apostle Paul wrote to these same people and in which he focused on the subject of salvation—as we would expect him to do (cf. Romans-Titus, and Hebrews also). If the recipients of Peter’s letter are Jews, then it certainly makes sense that Paul’s letter to them was the one we call Hebrews—if we actually have Paul’s letter.

⁵⁹ ὡς καὶ ἐν πάσαις τῶν ἐπιστολαῖς λαλῶν ἐν αὐταῖς περὶ τούτων, ἐν ταῖς ἐστὶν δυσνόητά τινα, ἃ οἱ ἀμαθεῖς καὶ ἀστήρικτοι στρεβλοῦσιν ὡς καὶ τὰς λοιπὰς γραφὰς πρὸς τὴν ἰδίαν αὐτῶν ἀπόλειαν – Peter refers to people who are distorting the “rest of the writings” (τὰς λοιπὰς γραφὰς), i.e., the OT. This could just as easily be Gentiles, who explicitly reject the Bible as God’s revelation to humanity, or it could be Jews, who misunderstand especially the Mosaic Covenant and thus miss the importance of Jesus as the suffering Messiah. The consequence of rejecting and/or distorting/misunderstanding intentionally the Bible is eternal destruction. This is what Peter has been writing so forcefully about avoiding for his readers. Peter is also saying that these same misguided people have read Paul’s letters, but they willingly distort them, too. And this occurs because these people are “unlearned” (οἱ ἀμαθεῖς) and “unstable” (ἀστήρικτοι). The first word seems to refer to their unwillingness to do all the work that is necessary to grasp the biblical message. So while they read and interpret the Bible and Paul’s letters, they fail to understand correctly what these documents are really saying. We get our words asteroid and steroids from the second word, which refers to these people’s unwillingness to remain committed to truth. Something else gets in the way of their staying grounded in their desire to learn about God, and they basically end up making things up about Him based upon their poor understanding of the biblical documents.

If Peter is saying in that culture and as a contemporary of Paul that his letters are hard to understand, especially Hebrews (?), then where does this leave us in the 21st century in a completely different culture and speaking a completely different language? Obviously, it puts us in a very precarious position, requiring that we be just that much more careful (and humble) in our study of the Bible.

⁶⁰ Ὑμεῖς οὖν, ἀγαπητοί, προγινώσκοντες φυλάσσεσθε, ἵνα μὴ τῇ τῶν ἀθέσμων πλάνῃ συναπαχθέντες ἐκπέσητε τοῦ ἰδίου στήριγμοῦ – The world will always contain people who reject truth and embrace error and who strongly recommend that everyone else do the same. Peter is exhorting his readers not to fall under the spell of such rebels against God, knowing ahead of time that their presence and intent will come along and contaminate culture and society in a demonstrative way. In order to avoid being influenced by such people, it will require a “firmness of commitment” (στήριγμοῦ) on the part of the recipients of this letter. The way that Peter is expressing these ideas, he must mean that retaining a “firmness of commitment” will not be easy. The strong influence of Christian’s own moral depravity and the attractiveness of clever unbelievers’ ideas and propaganda will result in an authentic, human struggle within Christians to stay the course in their undivided belief in the apostolic message of Jesus as the Messiah.

As with “unstable” in the previous verse, we get our word steroids from this term. An inwardness on steroids is the willfull choice on people’s part to remain fully committed not only to truth, but also to obtaining God’s eternal mercy through the advocacy of Jesus as high priest and Messiah.

⁶¹ αὐξάνετε δὲ ἐν χάριτι καὶ γνῶσει τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν καὶ σωτήρος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τ. αὐτῷ ἡ δόξα καὶ νῦν καὶ εἰς τὴν ἡμέραν αἰῶνος. °[ἀμήν.] – It is the concept of God’s grace that gets distorted the most by “unprincipled men” (τῶν ἀθέσμων), and the way to avoid such distortion is to continue learning the biblical message that centers on the existence and the purpose for the Messiah. Staying close to this truth by diligently, carefully, and consistently studying the apostolic documents along with those to which they refer, the OT, will allow a person to avoid the disaster of God’s wrath, judgment, and resultant eternal destruction.