

2 PETER

1:4 *What does this mean?*

This means that when believers are born again they undergo a moral transformation of their nature - from one that emulates the corruption of the world to one that reflects the character of God (CP V3 with 1Cor 6:19-20; Eph 4:21-32; Col 3:9-10).

1:10 *What teaching underlies what Peter says here?*

The underlying teaching here is that Christians cannot take their faith and salvation for granted. Believers must ensure their salvation by developing the Christian graces Peter enumerated in V5-7 (CP V5-7). If these graces are not evident in a Christian's life it is because he or she has deliberately failed to develop them (CP V9). In the Greek construction of this verse the word "forgotten" here points to a deliberate act. It suggests that the believer, by failing to make the effort to grow in grace as instructed in V5, has in effect wilfully turned his or her back on the stand they made for Christ when they were saved. This implies the possibility of apostatising - reverting to their old way of life (CP 2:20-22). The phrases, "...giving all diligence" in 1:5, and "give diligence" in 1:10, demonstrate that believers must be actively involved in their spiritual growth (CP Mt 12:30; Jn 6:27; 1 Cor 9:24-27; 15:58; 2 Cor 7:1; Ga 6:7-9; Eph 4:1; Php 2:12-13; Col 3:1-17; He 6:10-11; 12:1-2; 2 Pe 1:10-11; 3:18). Believers who pursue the qualities listed in 2 Pe 1:5-7 will never fall into sin and fail God's grace.

1:16-19 *How are we to understand what Peter says here?*

Here Peter refers to the second coming of Jesus, which was foreshadowed by His transfiguration on the mount to which Peter himself, together with James and John, was an eyewitness (CP Lu 9:28-36 (also Mt 17:1-8 and Mk 9:1-8); Jn 1:14). In 2Pe 1:16-19 Peter compares his experience at Jesus' transfiguration to the abiding, prophetic word of scripture. He teaches that the testimony of scripture is a surer confirmation of God's truth concerning Jesus than even the supernatural events of the transfiguration. Peter is not detracting from the events of the transfiguration but he wants believers to see that not even supernatural experiences such as the transfiguration, holds greater authority than the established word of God. The word contains everything we need - for salvation, for faith, for obedient living (CP Psalms 19:7; 119:9, 101-105, 130; Pr 6:23; 30:5; Jn 17:3-17).

Peter likens the word to a lamp that lights up a dark, squalid place, and he admonishes believers to feed upon it until the light of the word dawns in their soul, and Christ, who is the morning star, shines in their heart (CP Rev 2:28; 22:16). The idea behind what Peter says in 2 Pe 1:16-19 is for believers to flood their entire inner man with the radiating light of Christ and the revelation of the word until His return (CP Jn 1:4-5, 9; 2Cor 4:5-7). *When the day dawns* in 2Pe 1:19, refers to Christ's second coming, when the revelation of Christ in our hearts will be complete (CP 1Cor 13:12; 2Cor 3:18; 1Jn 3:2). See also comments on Mt 16:28.

1:20-21 *Is this teaching as some claim that only those holding high office in the church have the authority to interpret scripture?*

No, Peter is simply teaching here that the words of scripture are not what the prophets thought up for themselves, but that they were given to them to write by the Holy Spirit. It is because the scriptures are divinely inspired that they must be heeded (CP V 19 with Psalms 119:9; Ro 15:4; 2 Ti 3:16-17).

2:4-6 *Who are the angels referred to here and when did they sin?*

These are fallen angels who rebelled against God and sinned in the days of Noah. Jude also refers to them in his epistle (CP Jude 6-7). The angels' *first estate* which they did not keep was their original status in God's order - the exalted position they held in heaven above earthly humans (CP Psalms 8:4-5; He 2:6-7). The *habitation* the angels left was their heavenly abode; the *strange flesh* they went after were earthly women, and the *sin* they committed was fornication. These angels abandoned their heavenly abode and became sexually involved with earthly women, producing the giants of the Old Testament and corrupting all flesh, which precipitated the flood that destroyed everyone on earth except Noah and his family (CP Gen 6:1-8, 11-13, 17 with 1 Pe 3:18-20). The "sons of God" in Gen 6:2, the "spirits in prison" in 1 Pe 3:19, the "angels that kept not their first estate" in Jude 6, and the "angels that sinned" in 2 Pe 2:4 all refer to the same angels. Why they have been chained up in prison and others are free to work with Satan in the earth in the New Testament is not explained in scripture (See also comments on Mt 12:38-40, Eph 4:9, He 9:27 and 1 Pe 3:18-20 (A) and (B)).

2:5 *Does this mean as some teach that while he was building the ark Noah called upon the ungodly to repent and avoid the flood judgement?*

No, if Noah had called upon the ungodly to repent and avoid the flood judgement while he was building the ark, he would have been interfering with what was divinely ordained. Because every living soul on earth at that time except Noah had corrupted themselves, God had ordained that they be destroyed together with the earth and all its inhabitants. God covenanted with Noah that only he and his family would be saved (CP Gen 6:8-22, 14-22 with 1Pe 3:20). There is no suggestion whatever in any of those scriptures that Noah warned the ungodly of their impending doom and called upon them to repent, while he was building the ark. He only did what God commanded him to do, as Gen 6:22 clearly teaches.

Those who teach that Noah called upon the ungodly to repent and avoid the flood judgement while he was building the ark also use He 11:7 to support their claim (CP He 11:7). The word *condemned* here has been construed to mean that Noah vocalised his condemnation of the ungodly while he was building the ark, but that is not what the writer of Hebrews is alluding to at all. It was Noah's faith in building the

ark in contrast to the behaviour of the ungodly, that condemned them. It was implicit in what he did; it did not have to be spoken. Noah certainly preached righteousness to his contemporaries (church historians teach this - ref Josephus *Antiquities* 1.73-74 and 1 Clement 7.6), but it was before God warned him of the things to come, not after (see also comments on He 11:1).

2:6-9 *What do we learn from what is said here?*

We learn from this that the same God who brings destruction upon the ungodly, saves the Godly. The wicked are reserved for hell, and the righteous unto eternal life (CP V17; Rev 20:15 with 1Pe 1:3-5). Lot was Abraham's nephew (CP Gen 11:27). When Abraham left his homeland for Canaan, Lot went with him and eventually settled in Sodom. Its twin city was Gomorrah. Sodom and Gomorrah committed such abominations before God that he destroyed them both (CP Jude 7). Abraham prevailed upon the Lord to save Lot and his wife and daughters before destroying Sodom and Gomorrah (CP Gen 13:1-2, 5-13, 18:1-2, 16-17, 20-21, 19:1-26, 29). Sadly, Lot's wife looked back on Sodom after being warned not to, and was turned into a pillar of salt.

2:10 *Who are the "dignities"(KJV) to whom Peter refers here?*

Opinions vary among bible scholars as to what or whom Peter is referring here. The KJV call them "dignities". The NIV "celestial beings", and other versions the "glorious ones, the glorious beings above", and the "glories of the unseen world". *Vines expository dictionary of Old and New Testament words* defines dignities as "angelic powers, in respect of their state as commanding recognition". However, the Greek root word *doxa* is a general term that could include angels or men who have been vested with governmental authority by God. This includes church leaders. Therefore, the most likely explanation of what Peter says is that those in authority in the church had been slandered and abused by the false teachers. The parallel passage in Jude also bears this out (CP Jude 8).

The general sense of both Peter and Jude's charges against the false teachers is that they slander and abuse those whom God has set over them in the church and openly scorn God's authority over human ethical behaviour. Yet the angels, who are superior in power and might to the false teachers, do not speak reproachfully of them before God. (Remember, angels are witnesses to all that happens in the church. They are being taught the manifold wisdom of God by the church and observe believers constantly (CP 1Cor 4:9; 11:4-10; Eph 3:9-11; 1Ti 5:21; 1Pe 1:10-12)).

Both Peter and Jude contrast the shameful behaviour of the false teachers to the humble restraint displayed by the angels (CP 2Pe 2:11-12; Jude 9-10). See also comments on 1Cor 11:3-16, Eph 3:9-12, 1Pe 1:10-12.

2:20-22 *To whom is Peter referring here?*

Peter is referring here to the false teachers of V 1-3 and 10-19 (CP V1-3, 10-19). The name "Balaam" in V15 refers to an Old Testament prophet whose name is used in the New Testament to symbolize false and seducing teachers (CP Num 31:16 with Jude 10-11; Rev 2:14). *The way of Balaam* refers to a love for personal honour and material gains at the expense of God's people. 2 Pe 2:20-22 also teaches that the false teachers referred to were once saved but had apostatized and so had forfeited their salvation. This proves that salvation is not an unforfeitable possession in this life - it only becomes unforfeitable at the end of this life if one is sowing to the spirit (CP Eze 18:24-26; 33:12-13; He 6:4-6; 10:26-31; Rev 22:11-12). See also comments on He 3:7-11, 4:11-12, 6:4-6 and 10:26-31.

3:1-7 *What do we learn from what Peter says here?*

We learn from this that those who scoff at the promise of Christ's second coming, erroneously believe that God will not intervene in human history to punish the ungodly and bring down judgement upon the earth, even though it is taught throughout scripture (CP Psa 102:25-26; Isa 2:10-21; 13:6-16; 24:17-23; 34:1-8; 51:6; Jer 46:10; Eze 30:3; Joel 1:15; 2:30-31; 3:9-16; Amos 5:18-20; Obad 15:16; Mic 1:2-4; Hab 2:3; Zeph 1:7-8, 18; 2:2-3; Zech 14:1-7; Mal 4:5-6; Mt 24:45-51; Lu 17:24-36; 21:25-28; 1 Th 5:2-3; He 1:10-12; 10:37; Rev 6:12-17; Rev 19:11-21). The scoffers think that because everything has continued without God's intervention for so long that it will just go on forever. They have deliberately closed their minds to the flood judgement in Noah's day, when God destroyed the earth and all its inhabitants because of their wickedness. Only Noah, his wife and three sons and their wives, were saved (CP Gen 6:1-14, 17-18, 22 with Mt 24:37-39; 1Pe 3:18-20). Just as surely as God destroyed the earth and all its ungodly inhabitants by water in Noah's day, so too will He destroy the heavens and the earth and all its ungodly inhabitants in the age to come. This time however, the heavens and the earth will be destroyed by fire (CP 2Pe 3:7, 10-12).

The word *reserved* in 2Pe 3:7 (KJV), means "to lay up in store". This underlines the absolute certainty of a future judgement. This judgement will take place at the time of the great white throne judgement at the end of Christ's one thousand years reign on earth, when all the ungodly who ever lived will be cast down to hell "... the day of judgement and perdition of ungodly men" (CP Rev 20:4-15). After destroying the heavens and the earth by fire, God will then renew them (CP Isa 65:17; 66:22; 2Pe 3:13; Rev 21:1). See also comments on Rev 20:11.

3:8-9 *What does Peter mean that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day?*

While the false teachers scoffed at the promise of Christ's second coming because of the time that had elapsed, Peter reminds believers that the delay only seems long because of our time perspective. But God is not subject to time as we are; He inhabits eternity,

and the passing of a thousand years is no different to Him than the passing of one day so far as the events He foretells are concerned (CP V1-4 with Psalms 90:1-4; Isa 57:15). It is not slackness on God's part that delays Christ's second coming, but His "longsuffering" - His patience toward sinners. By delaying the second coming, God provides further opportunity for sinners to repent and be saved (CP 2 Pe 3:15 with Psalms 86:15; Isa 30:18; Mt 24:14; Ro 2:4; 9:22). God does not wish anyone to perish (CP Eze 33:11; Ro 11:32; 1Ti 2:1-4). The only way to hasten Christ's second coming is for believers to continue faithfully in the work He has assigned to them and to persevere in prayer, in spite of continued opposition and rejection, for God's will to be done on earth (CP 2Pe 3:10-12 with Lu 17:20 - 18:8). See also comments on Mt 24:1-3, 25:14-30, Lu 18:1-8, 19:11-27.

(Evolutionists cite 2 Pe 3:8 to show that the six days of creation in Gen 1 are only symbolic and represent long periods of time, even billions of years, but Peter is not saying here that a day **equals** a thousand years with God. He is simply making the point that God is outside of time as He is the creator of time, and so the passage of a real, literal day is **like** a thousand years to Him. Peter is not talking about creation at all here anyway, but of the Lord's patience toward sinners).

3:10 *What is the "day of the Lord" referred to here?*

Scriptures fix the day of the Lord as commencing with the great tribulation and culminating at the great white throne judgement, at which time the present heavens and earth will be destroyed by fire before being made new again (CP V7, 12-13 with Rev 21:1). The day of the Lord encompasses the great tribulation, the second coming of Christ, the battle of Armageddon and the defeat of Antichrist and his armies, Christ's one thousand years reign on earth and the Great White Throne judgement (CP Psalms 50:3; Isa 2:10-17; 13:6-16 (with Mt 24:29-31; Rev 6:12-17, 8:12-13); 34:1-8; Jer 46:10; Eze 30:1-3; Joel 1:15-20; 2:1-11; 3:1-2, 13-16; Amos 5:18-20; Obad 15; Zeph 1:7-13, 18; 2:1-3; Zech 14:1-9; Mal 4:1-6; Mt 24:3-42; Mk 13:4-26; Lu 21:5-31; 1Th 5:2-3; Rev 6:15-17; 19:11-15; 20:11-15).

Those scriptures all teach that in the day of the Lord God's wrath is poured out on sinners, not saints. This clearly confirms the view that the church will not go through the tribulation but will be "raptured" before hand (CP Ro 5:9; Eph 5:6; 1Th 1:10; 5:1-9; 2Th 2:1-9 with Jn 14:1-3; 1Cor 15:51-58; 1Th 4:13-18).

The *he* of 2Th 2:7 is the church. The majority of Christians cannot reconcile the church as the *he* of 2Th 2:7 because they have always thought of the church as a woman - the Bride of Christ. Yet nowhere in scripture is the church ever called a woman, or referred to by a feminine pronoun. Furthermore, the Bride of Christ is clearly identified in scripture as the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, "the mother of us all" (CP Ga 4:26 with Rev 19:7-9; 21:2, 9-10). The beginning of the day of the Lord is unknown but Christians need have no fear - they will have been caught up to be with Jesus before then. (For a more detailed study on the "Rapture" see comments on Mt 24:1-3, Lu 21:36, Jn 5:28-29, 14:1-3, 1Cor 15:51-58, Php 3:20-21, 1Th 4:13-18, 5:1-11, 2Th 1:7-10, 2:1-3, 2:6-8. For a more detailed study on the "Bride of Christ" see comments on Ro 7:4, 2Cor 11:2, Eph 2:15-16(B), 4:13, 5:25-32, Rev 19:7-9, 21:2, 9-10)

3:12 *What is the "day of God" referred to here?*

The day of God referred to here means the time when Jesus hands over the kingdom to God the Father at the end of His thousand year's reign, after the great white throne judgement, and the new heavens and the new earth are created (CP 1 Cor 15:24-28).

3:13-18 *How are we to understand what Peter says here?*

While they are waiting for God's promise of new heavens and a new earth to be fulfilled, Christians must zealously remain morally pure and at peace with God. The promise of new heavens and a new earth is rooted in the Old Testament and quoted many times in the New Testament (CP Psalms 102:25-26, 51:6, 65:17, 66:22 with Mt 24:35; Ro 8:18-25; He 1:10-12, 12:25-27; Rev 20:11, 21:1 (See also comments on Rev 20:11)).

God's patience with sinners is the opportunity He gives Christians for salvation (CP Ro 2:4, 2Pe 3:8-9). Paul also wrote of this in his epistles (CP 1Cor 1:4-8, 15:58; 1Th 3:12-13, 5:23; 2Ti 4:18). Some of the things Paul wrote about were difficult to understand, and false teachers twisted them as they also did with other scriptures, to justify the error of their way. So they bring about their own destruction (CP 2Pe 2:12-22; Jude 3-4, 8-19). Peter warns Christians to beware and not allow themselves to be led into error by these false teachers. Rather, they are to grow in the grace and knowledge of their Lord and saviour, Jesus Christ (CP 1Pe 1:13-16, 2:1-2; 2Pe 1:10-12).