



# Peace, Proclamation & Perceptiveness 2 Peter 3:14-17

TO: **LEGISLATORS', STAFF & LOBBYISTS**FROM: **DAN MADISON**DATE: **Week of May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2009**

*While the end of the 75<sup>th</sup> Regular Legislative Session rapidly approaches, there is still much to consider and much to act upon. There remains a great responsibility upon the shoulders of legislators as they do “the peoples” business and govern in a manner that will provide for the ongoing benefit of their constituency. So too, it is with our study of the “Life and Letters of the Apostle Peter. We have been looking at an aged Apostle who is pouring out his heart so that believers could withstand the pressures, and false teachers of their day. Much like legislators, Peter felt the great responsibilities of leadership as he prepared “his constituency” for what lie ahead.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

We are reaching the end of our study of “The Life and Letters of the Apostle Peter.” As you will recall, Peter was writing to the beleaguered churches in Asia Minor, and by force of Scripture, to us (2 Timothy 3:16). In this closing chapter, Peter provides a panoramic view of the glorious future that awaits all who have rested their hope in Christ. Our studies have revealed that Christ:

- Will return to receive His own unto Himself (1 Peter 3:18).
- Will return to secure forever the souls He purchased with His own blood (1 Peter 1:18-19).
- Will destroy this world (bound in sin as it is) and will create a new heaven’s and a new earth fit to be the eternal dwelling place of His people (2 Peter 3:8-13).

Peter’s encouragement to his readers and to us is to live in light of this glorious future; to live with an eye towards the goal of redemption. Indeed, in verse 14 he says: “...since you look for these things...” Christians should live with a spirit of anticipation and activity! Peter now addresses vital distinctives of the Christian life.

## II. INTERNAL PEACE 2 PETER 3:14

*NKJ 2 Peter 3:14 Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless;*

This idea of diligence is an ongoing theme of Peter’s letter. It ought to be manifest in such a way that certain qualities will be evidenced in the life of the believer. These qualities are specified as being found among those who live “in peace, pursuing spotlessness and blamelessness.”

**Query:** For what kinds of peace do people strive today? Why, do you think, with so little success?

True peace does not come through external things. An individual may have everything from a worldly standpoint and yet be without peace. Peace comes through the knowledge of God’s plans and a perfect reliance on Him (see Phil. 4:6-7). Even in the midst of great calamity, the Christian may have peace that passes worldly understanding<sup>2</sup>.

## III. FAITHFUL PROCLAMATION 2 PETER 3:15A

*NKJ 2 Peter 3:15 “...and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation...”*

Peter adds a final reminder regarding the “patience of the Lord.” Earlier, in verse 9, he had noted that the patience of God was for the benefit of mankind to bring them to salvation. This is still the point! This is the time of God’s grace; the open window of grace. God is “...not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (verse 9)

**Query:** The Lord is patient & longsuffering. What opportunities and/or responsibilities does His patience afford the believer?

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John MacArthur, in his commentary on 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter makes the following point: “In the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32), Jesus effectively illustrated the reality of God’s merciful patience toward sinners. The story tells of a rebellious son who abandoned his family for a life of immorality and dissipation. For a long time he wasted his opportunity, passing up the privilege to serve his father. But one day he came to his senses, repented of his sinful lifestyle, and returned home. Instead of being rejected or disowned by his father—or received reluctantly—the father embraced the son with love and compassion. That father pictures God who responds to penitent sinners with mercy and grace that is lavishly, joyously, and generously poured out on those who repent and come to Him in faith. And all heaven rejoices, as described by the feast the father had in honor of his son.”<sup>3</sup>

**Thought for application:** When Christians anticipate the day of God, which for them will mean eternal blessings, they should also remember the day of the Lord, which for the lost will mean eternal punishment. With that in mind, the opportunity of God’s current patience should only heighten our evangelistic zeal<sup>4</sup>. (2 Timothy 4:5)

### IV. DOCTRINAL PERCEPTIVENESS 2 PETER 3: 15-17

<sup>NKJ</sup> **2 Peter 3:15** ... [just] as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you,<sup>16</sup> as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.

Peter and Paul had not always been on the friendliest of terms (Galatians 2:11-14). And yet, we see here the aged apostle bearing **no grudge after being rebuked!** Peter unashamedly refers to Paul as “our beloved brother;” **and the one who has this special wisdom from God; the one who has written things that we have to study hard to understand.** As we look at Peter’s humility and candor, we see a godly man who desired to be used of God, and had a great appreciation for God’s servant, Paul. How good if we could apply this pattern of reconciliation and unity to our lifestyles today.

**Query:** Peter tells us that Paul wrote some things that are hard to understand. What is the thrust of that statement?

Understand that the problem is not with Paul’s writings (Galatians 1:11-12). He had written some things that are hard to understand, but the problem is/was that false teachers are “untaught & unstable.” Not only had they not learned how to properly interpret the Scripture, they were without grounding in the truth. They were afloat on the sea without a guidance system or tools to propel the boat properly. So it is with false teachers today.

False teachers **distort** or twist the Word of God, especially those difficult passages that require instruction and careful study to interpret correctly. They twist the Word to suit their own sinful purposes. That is the point of this reference to Paul’s letters.

**Thought for Application:** The battleground between truth and error has been, and will always be the Word of God. It has been so ever since the serpent said to eve, “Indeed, has God said, ‘You shall not eat from any tree in the garden?’” (Gen. 3:1)

### V. APPLICATION/CONCLUSION 2 PETER 3:17

<sup>NAU</sup> **2 Peter 3:17** You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness,

Verse 17 is a call to be serious (not casual) about spiritual things. Why? Because if you are not, you run the risk of **“being carried away by the error of unprincipled men.”**

The Greek Word for **“carried away”** (**sunapagō**) means to be “swept along with the crowd.” It is like being caught up in the crowd as thousands try to leave a stadium at the same time after a big football game—everyone going the same direction; individuals helpless to turn and go against the flow. Even Barnabas was not immune (Gal. 2:11-13).<sup>5</sup> The implication here is that Peter’s readers have no excuse, (having been taught by both Paul and Peter) and should not be deluded by false teachers and their teaching.

Complacency is the enemy! We must never allow ourselves to fall into this trap. Error has many attractive



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faces that can deceive even the most mature believer. Our failure to prioritize God's Word in our lives and seek a holy and godly lifestyle will be our undoing.

The Greek Word "fall" (**ekpēdaō**) has the idea of "falling from grace" (Galatians 5:4) and "concerning the wreck of a ship" in Acts 27:29. The Christian who "falls" away from the truth makes a wreck of his life<sup>6</sup>. While maintaining his/her salvation, life becomes hard and unstable because of false beliefs.

So what is the bottom line? **Be on Guard and grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.** That will be our topic next time as we conclude 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter.

**Thought for Application:** In a day of mass communication, mass media, and mass movements, the Christian is more than ever subjected to widely varying influences and teachings. We must beware, as Peter warns, of the influences of false teachers within the framework of Christianity. Twisting the Scripture is not a new practice, and is as prevalent today as it was when Peter wrote. **Question for next time: *How are we protected from falling for these influences?***

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<sup>1</sup> Ferrell, Tom *A Growth That Endures...*

([http://www.apcweb.org/Images/Sermons/secondpeter/2Peter3\\_14-18\\_745.pdf](http://www.apcweb.org/Images/Sermons/secondpeter/2Peter3_14-18_745.pdf))

<sup>2</sup> Barbieri, Lou, *Everyman's Bible Commentary First & Second Peter* (Moody Publishers, Chicago, ©1975,1977,2003) p138

<sup>3</sup> MacArthur, John, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary 2 Peter & Jude*, (Moody Publishers, Chicago, ©2005) p134

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> Ferrell, Tom, p7

<sup>6</sup> Barbieri, Lou, p140