

# 2 Peter

## Salutation

1:1 From Simeon<sup>1</sup> Peter,<sup>2</sup> a slave<sup>3</sup> and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who through the righteousness of our God<sup>4</sup> and Savior,<sup>5</sup> Jesus Christ,

**1 tc** Several witnesses, a few of them very important (1<sup>72</sup> B Ψ 69 81 614 623 630 1241 1243 2464 *al* vg co), read Σίμων (*Simōn*, “Simon”) for Συμεών (*Sumeōn*, “Simeon”). However, this appears to be a motivated reading as it is the more common spelling. Συμεών occurs only here and in Acts 15:14 as a spelling for the apostle’s name. The reading Συμεών enjoys ample and widespread support among the mss, strongly suggesting its authenticity. Further, this Hebraic spelling is a subtle argument for the authenticity of this letter, since a forger would almost surely follow the normal spelling of the name (1 Peter begins only with “Peter” giving no help either way).

**2 tn** Grk “Simeon Peter.” The word “from” is not in the Greek text, but has been supplied to indicate the sender of the letter.

**3 tn** Though δοῦλος (*doulos*) is normally translated “servant,” the word does not bear the connotation of a free individual serving another. BDAG notes that “servant” for ‘slave’ is largely confined to Biblical transl. and early American times...in normal usage at the present time the two words are carefully distinguished” (BDAG 260 s.v.). At the same time, perhaps “servant” is apt in that the δοῦλος of Jesus Christ took on that role voluntarily, unlike a slave. The most accurate translation is “bondservant” (sometimes found in the ASV for δοῦλος), in that it often indicates one who sells himself into slavery to another. But as this is archaic, few today understand its force.

**sn** Undoubtedly the background for the concept of being the Lord’s slave or servant is to be found in the Old Testament scriptures. For a Jew this concept did not connote drudgery, but honor and privilege. It was used of national Israel at times (Isa 43:10), but was especially associated with famous OT personalities, including such great men as Moses (Josh 14:7), David (Ps 89:3; cf. 2 Sam 7:5, 8) and Elijah (2 Kgs 10:10); all these men were “servants (or slaves) of the Lord.”

**4 tc** A few mss (N Ψ pc vg<sup>ms</sup> sy<sup>ph</sup> sa) read κυρίου (*kurios*, “Lord”) for θεοῦ (*theou*, “God”) in v. 1, perhaps due to confusion of letters (since both words were *nomina sacra*), or perhaps because “our God and Savior, Jesus Christ” is an unusual expression (though hardly because of theological objections to θεοῦ).

**5 tn** The terms “God and Savior” both refer to the same person, Jesus Christ. This is one of the clearest statements in the NT concerning the deity of Christ. The construction in Greek is known as the Granville Sharp rule, named after the English philanthropist-linguist who first clearly articulated the rule in 1798. Sharp pointed out that in the construction article-noun-καί-noun (where καί [*kaì*] = “and”), when two nouns are singular, personal, and common (i.e., not proper names), they always had the same referent. Illustrations such as “the friend and brother,” “the God and Father,” etc. abound in the NT to prove Sharp’s point. In fact, the construction occurs elsewhere in 2 Peter, strongly suggesting that the author’s idiom was the same as the rest of the NT authors’ (cf., e.g., 1:11 [“the Lord and Savior”], 2:20 [“the Lord and Savior”]). The only issue is whether terms such as “God” and “Savior” could be considered common nouns as opposed to proper names. Sharp and others who followed (such as T. F. Middleton in his masterful *The Doctrine of the Greek Article*) demonstrated that a proper name in Greek was one that could not be pluralized. Since both “God” (θεός, *theos*) and “savior” (σωτήρ, *sōtēr*) were occasionally found in the plural, they did not constitute proper names, and hence, do fit Sharp’s rule. Although

have been granted<sup>6</sup> a faith just as precious<sup>7</sup> as ours. 1:2 May grace and peace be lavished on you<sup>8</sup> as you grow<sup>9</sup> in the rich knowledge<sup>10</sup> of God and of Jesus our Lord!<sup>11</sup>

## Believers’ Salvation and the Work of God

1:3 I can pray this because his divine power<sup>12</sup>

there have been 200 years of attempts to dislodge Sharp’s rule, all attempts have been futile. Sharp’s rule stands vindicated after all the dust has settled. For more information on the application of Sharp’s rule to 2 Pet 1:1, see *ExSyn* 272, 276-77, 290. See also Titus 2:13 and Jude 4.

**6 tn** The verb λαγχάνω (*lanchanō*) means “obtain by lot,” “receive.” A literal translation would put it in the active, but some of the richness of the term would thereby be lost. It is used in collocation with κλήρος (*klēros*, “lot”) frequently enough in the LXX to suggest the connotation of reception of a gift, or in the least reception of something that one does not deserve. H. Hanse’s statement (*TDNT* 4:1) that “Even where there is no casting of lots, the attainment is not by one’s own effort or as a result of one’s own exertions, but is like ripe fruit falling into one’s lap” is apt for this passage. The author’s opening line is a reminder that our position in Christ is not due to merit, but grace.

**7 tn** Grk “equal in value/honor.”

**sn** A faith just as precious. The author’s point is that the Gentile audience has been blessed with a salvation that is in no way inferior to that of the Jews.

**8 tn** Grk “May grace and peace be multiplied to you.”

**9 tn** The words “as you grow” are not in the Greek text, but seem to be implied.

**10 tn** The word ἐπίγνωσις (*epignōsis*) could simply mean knowledge, but J. B. Mayor (*Jude and Second Peter*, 171-74) has suggested that it is often a fuller knowledge, especially in reference to things pertaining to spiritual truth. R. Bauckham (*Jude, 2 Peter* [WBC], 169-70) argues that it refers to the knowledge of God that is borne of conversion, but this is probably saying too much and is asking questions of the author that are foreign to his way of thinking. The term is used in 1:2, 3, 8; 2:20 (the verb form occurs twice, both in 2:21). In every instance it evidently involves being in the inner circle of those who connect to God, though it does not necessarily imply such a direct and relational knowledge of God for each individual within that circle. An analogy would be Judas Iscariot: Even though he was a disciple of the Lord, he was not converted.

**11 tn** A comma properly belongs at the end of v. 2 instead of a period, since v. 3 is a continuation of the same sentence. With the optative in v. 2, the author has departed from Paul’s normal greeting (in which no verb is used), rendering the greeting a full-blown sentence. Nevertheless, this translation divides the verses up along thematic lines in spite of breaking up the sentence structure. For more explanation, see note on “power” in v. 3.

**12 tn** The verse in Greek starts out with ὡς (*hōs*) followed by a genitive absolute construction, dependent on the main verb in v. 2. Together, they form a subordinate causal clause. A more literal rendering would be “because his divine power...” The idea is that the basis or authority for the author’s prayer in v. 2 (that grace and peace would abound to the readers) was that God’s power was manifested in their midst. The author’s sentence structure is cumbersome even in Greek; hence, the translation has broken this up into two sentences.

has bestowed on us everything necessary<sup>1</sup> for life and godliness through the rich knowledge<sup>2</sup> of the one who called<sup>3</sup> us by<sup>4</sup> his own glory and excellence. 1:4 Through these things<sup>5</sup> he has bestowed on us his precious and most magnificent promises, so that by means of what was promised<sup>6</sup> you may become partakers of the divine nature,<sup>7</sup> after escaping<sup>8</sup> the worldly corruption that is produced by evil desire.<sup>9</sup> 1:5 For this very reason,<sup>10</sup> make every effort<sup>11</sup> to add to

**1 tn** The word “necessary” is not in the Greek, but is implied by the preposition *προς* (*pros*).

**2 tn** See the note on “rich knowledge” in v. 2.

**3 sn** *Called*. The term *καλέω* (*kaleō*), used here in its participial form, in soteriological contexts when God is the subject, always carries the nuance of effectual calling. That is, the one who is called is not just *invited* to be saved – he is also and always saved (cf. Rom 8:30). Calling takes place at the moment of conversion, while election takes place in eternity past (cf. Eph 1:4).

**4 tn** The datives *ἰδία δόξη καὶ ἀρετῇ* (*idia doxē kai aretē*) could be taken either instrumentally (“by [means of] his own glory and excellence”) or advantage (“for [the benefit of] his own glory and excellence”). Both the connection with divine power and the textual variant found in several early and important witnesses (διὰ δόξης καὶ ἀρετῆς in P<sup>72</sup> B 0209<sup>m</sup>) argues for an instrumental meaning. The instrumental notion is also affirmed by the meaning of *ἀρετῇ* (“excellence”) in contexts that speak of God’s attributes (BDAG 130 s.v. *ἀρετῇ* 2) in this verse.

**5 tn** Verse 4 is in Greek a continuation of v. 3, “through which things.”

**sn** The phrase *these things* refers to God’s glory and excellence.

**6 tn** *Grk* “through them.” The implication is that through inheriting and acting on these promises the believers will increasingly become partakers of the divine nature.

**7 sn** Although the author has borrowed the expression *partakers of the divine nature* from paganism, his meaning is clearly Christian. He does not mean apotheosis (man becoming a god) in the pagan sense, but rather that believers have an organic connection with God. Because of such a connection, God can truly be called our Father. Conceptually, this bears the same meaning as Paul’s “in Christ” formula. The author’s statement, though startling at first, is hardly different from Paul’s prayer for the Ephesians that they “may be filled up to all the fullness of God” (3:19).

**8 tn** The aorist participle *ἀποφυγόντες* (*apophugontes*) is often taken as attendant circumstance to the preceding verb *γέννησθε* (*genēsthe*). As such, the sense is “that you might become partakers...and might escape...” However, it does not follow the contours of the vast majority of attendant circumstance participles (in which the participle *precedes* the main verb, among other things). Further, attendant circumstance participles are frequently confused with result participles (which *do* follow the verb). Many who take this as attendant circumstance are probably viewing it semantically as result (“that you might become partakers...and [thereby] escape...”). But this is next to impossible since the participle is *aorist*: Result participles are categorically present tense.

**9 tn** *Grk* “the corruption in the world (in/because of) lust.”

**10 tn** The Greek text begins with “and,” a typical Semitism.

**sn** The *reason* given is all the provisions God has made for the believer, mentioned in vv. 3-4.

**11 tn** The participle is either means (“by making every effort”) or attendant circumstance (“make every effort”). Although it fits the normal contours of attendant circumstance participles, the semantics are different. Normally, attendant circumstance is used of an action that is a necessary prelude to the action of the main verb. But “making every effort” is what energizes the main verb here. Hence it is best taken as means. However, for the sake of smoothness the translation has rendered it as a command with the main verb translated

your faith excellence,<sup>12</sup> to excellence, knowledge; 1:6 to knowledge, self-control; to self-control, perseverance;<sup>13</sup> to perseverance, godliness; 1:7 to godliness, brotherly affection; to brotherly affection, unselfish<sup>14</sup> love.<sup>15</sup> 1:8 For if<sup>16</sup> these things are really yours<sup>17</sup> and are continually increasing,<sup>18</sup> they will keep you from becoming<sup>19</sup> ineffective and unproductive in your pursuit of<sup>20</sup> knowing our Lord Jesus Christ more intimately.<sup>21</sup> 1:9 But<sup>22</sup> concerning the one who lacks such things<sup>23</sup> – he is blind. That is to say, he is<sup>24</sup> nearsighted, since he has forgotten about

as an infinitive. This is in accord with English idiom.

**12 tn** Or “moral excellence,” “virtue”; this is the same word used in v. 3 (“the one who has called us by his own glory and excellence”).

**13 tn** Perhaps “steadfastness,” though that is somewhat archaic. A contemporary colloquial rendering would be “stick-to-it-iveness.”

**14 sn** The final virtue or character quality in this list is “love” (*ἀγάπη*, *agapē*). The word was not used exclusively of Christian or unselfish love in the NT (e.g., the cognate, *ἀγαπάω* [*agapaō*]), is used in John 3:19 of the love of darkness, but in a list such as this in which *ἀγάπη* is obviously the crescendo, *unselfish love* is evidently in view. R. Bauckham (*Jude, 2 Peter* [WBC], 187) notes that as the crowning virtue, *ἀγάπη* encompasses all the previous virtues.

**15 tn** Each item in Greek begins with “and.” The conjunction is omitted for the sake of good English style, with no change in meaning.

**sn** *Add to your faith excellence...love*. The list of virtues found in vv. 5-7 stands in tension to the promises given in vv. 2-4. What appears to be a synergism of effort or even a contradiction (God supplies the basis, the promises, the grace, the power, etc., while believers must also provide the faith, excellence, etc.) in reality encapsulates the mystery of sanctification. Each believer is responsible before God for his conduct and spiritual growth, yet that growth could not take place without God’s prior work and constant enabling. We must not neglect our responsibility, yet the enabling and the credit is God’s. Paul says the same thing: “Continue working out your salvation with humility and dependence, for the one bringing forth in you both the desire and the effort...is God” (Phil 2:12-13).

**16 tn** The participles are evidently conditional, as most translations render them.

**17 tn** The participle *ὑπάρχοντα* (*huparchonta*) is stronger than the verb *εἶμι* (*eimi*), usually implying a permanent state. Hence, the addition of “really” is implied.

**18 sn** *Continually increasing*. There are evidently degrees of ownership of these qualities, implying degrees of productivity in one’s intimacy with Christ. An idiomatic rendering of the first part of v. 8 would be “For if you can claim ownership of these virtues in progressively increasing amounts...”

**19 tn** *Grk* “cause [you] not to become.”

**20 tn** *Grk* “unto,” “toward”; although it is possible to translate the preposition *εἰς* (*eis*) as simply “in.”

**21 tn** *Grk* “the [rich] knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Verse 8 in Greek does not make a full stop (period), for v. 9 begins with a subordinate relative pronoun. Contemporary English convention requires a full stop in translation, however.

**22 tn** *Grk* “for.” The connection, though causal, is also adverbative.

**23 tn** *Grk* “to the one for whom these things are not present.”

**24 tn** The words “that is to say, he is” are not in Greek. The word order is unusual. One might expect the author to have said “he is nearsighted and blind” (as the NIV has construed it), but this is not the word order in Greek. Perhaps the author begins with a strong statement followed by a clarification, i.e., that being nearsighted in regard to these virtues is as good as being blind.

the cleansing of his past sins. **1:10** Therefore, brothers and sisters,<sup>1</sup> make every effort to be sure of your calling and election.<sup>2</sup> For by doing this<sup>3</sup> you will never<sup>4</sup> stumble into sin.<sup>5</sup> **1:11** For thus an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, will be richly provided for you.

*Salvation Based on the Word of God*

**1:12** Therefore, I intend to remind you constantly<sup>6</sup> of these things even though you know them and are well established in the truth that you now have. **1:13** Indeed, as long as I am in this tabernacle,<sup>7</sup> I consider it right to stir you up by way of a reminder, **1:14** since I know that my tabernacle will soon be removed,<sup>8</sup> because<sup>9</sup> our Lord Jesus Christ revealed this to me.<sup>10</sup> **1:15** Indeed, I will also make every effort that, after my departure, you have a testimony of these things.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>1</sup> **tn** Grk “brothers,” but the Greek word may be used for “brothers and sisters” or “fellow Christians” as here (cf. BDAG 18 s.v. ἀδελφός 1., where considerable nonbiblical evidence for the plural ἀδελφοί [adelphoi] meaning “brothers and sisters” is cited).

<sup>2</sup> **tn** Grk “make your calling and election sure.”

**sn** Make sure of your calling and election. The author is not saying that virtue and holiness produce salvation, but that virtue and holiness are the evidence of salvation.

<sup>3</sup> **tn** Grk “these things.”

<sup>4</sup> **tn** In Greek οὐ μὴ (ou mē) followed by the subjunctive is normally the strongest way to negate an action. Coupled with πότε (pote, “ever”), the statement is even more emphatic. The author is offering sage advice on how to grow in grace.

<sup>5</sup> **tn** The words “into sin” are not in the Greek text, but the Greek word πταίω (ptaiō) is used in soteriological contexts for more than a mere hesitation or stumbling. BDAG 894 s.v. 2 suggests that here it means “be ruined, be lost,” referring to loss of salvation, while also acknowledging that the meaning “to make a mistake, go astray, sin” is plausible in this context. Alternatively, the idea of πταίω here could be that of “suffer misfortune” (so K. L. Schmidt, TDNT 6:884), as a result of sinning.

<sup>6</sup> **tn** Grk “always.”

<sup>7</sup> **tn** Or “tent.” The author uses this as a metaphor for his physical body.

**sn** The use of the term *tabernacle* for the human body is reminiscent both of John’s statements about Jesus (“he tabernacled among us” in John 1:14; “the temple of his body” in John 2:21) and Paul’s statements about believers (e.g., “you are God’s building” in 1 Cor 3:9; “you are God’s temple” in 1 Cor 3:16; “your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit” in 1 Cor 6:19; “holy temple” in Eph 2:21). It is precisely because the Shekinah glory has been transferred from the OT temple to the person of Jesus Christ and, because he inhabits believers, to them, that the author can speak this way. His life on earth, his physical existence, is a walking tabernacle, a manifestation of the glory of God.

<sup>8</sup> **tn** Grk “since I know that the removal of my tabernacle is [coming] soon.”

<sup>9</sup> **tn** Grk “just as.”

<sup>10</sup> **sn** When the author says our Lord Jesus Christ revealed this to me, he is no doubt referring to the prophecy that is partially recorded in John 21:18-19.

<sup>11</sup> **sn** There are various interpretations of v. 15. For example, the author could be saying simply, “I will make every effort that you remember these things.” But the collocation of σπουδάζω (spoudazō) with μνήνη (mnēnē) suggests a more specific image. R. Bauckham (*Jude, 2 Peter* [WBC], 201-2) is right when he notes that these two words together suggest a desire to write some sort of letter or testament. Most commentators recognize the difficulty in seeing the future verb

**1:16** For we did not follow cleverly concocted fables when we made known to you the power and return<sup>12</sup> of our Lord Jesus Christ;<sup>13</sup> no,<sup>14</sup> we were<sup>15</sup> eyewitnesses of his<sup>16</sup> grandeur.<sup>17</sup> **1:17** For he received honor and glory from God the Father, when that<sup>18</sup> voice was conveyed to him by the Majestic Glory: “This is my dear Son, in whom I am delighted.”<sup>19</sup> **1:18** When this

σπουδάζω (spoudazō) as referring to 2 Peter itself (the present or aorist would have been expected, i.e., “I have made every effort,” or “I am making every effort”). Some have suggested that Mark’s Gospel is in view. The difficulty with this is threefold: (1) Mark is probably to be dated before 2 Peter, (2) early patristic testimony seems to imply that Peter was the unwitting source behind Mark’s Gospel; and (3) “these things” would seem to refer, in the least, to the prophecy about Peter’s death (absent in Mark). A more plausible suggestion might be that the author was thinking of the ending of John’s Gospel. This is possible because (1) John 21:18-19 is the only other place in the NT that refers to Peter’s death; indeed, it fleshes out the cryptic statement in v. 14 a bit more; (2) both 2 Peter and John were apparently written to Gentiles in and around Asia Minor; (3) both books were probably written after Paul’s death and perhaps even to Paul’s churches (cf. 2 Pet 3:1-2, 15-16); and (4) John 21 gives the appearance of being added to the end of a finished work. There is thus some possibility that this final chapter was added at the author’s request, in part to encourage Gentile Christians to face impending persecution, knowing that the martyrdom of even (Paul and) Peter was within the purview of God’s sovereignty. That 2 Pet 1:15 alludes to John 21 is of course by no means certain, but remains at least the most plausible of the suggestions put forth thus far.

<sup>12</sup> **tn** Grk “coming.”

<sup>13</sup> **tn** Grk “for we did not make known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ by following cleverly concocted fables.”

<sup>14</sup> **tn** Grk “but, instead.”

<sup>15</sup> **tn** Grk “became.”

<sup>16</sup> **tn** Grk “that one’s.” That is, “eyewitnesses of the grandeur of that one.” The remote demonstrative pronoun is used perhaps to indicate esteem for Jesus. Along these lines it is interesting to note that “the Pythagoreans called their master after his death simply ἐκείνος” as a term of reverence and endearment (BDAG 302 s.v. ἐκείνος a.γ.).

<sup>17</sup> **sn** The term *grandeur* was used most frequently of God’s majesty. In the 1st century, it was occasionally used of the divine majesty of the emperor. 2 Pet 1:1 and 1:11 already include hints of a polemic against emperor-worship (in that “God and Savior” and “Lord and Savior” were used of the emperor).

<sup>18</sup> **tn** Grk “such a.” The pronoun τοιαύδε (toiasde) most likely refers to what follows, notifying something of the uniqueness of the proclamation.

<sup>19</sup> **tn** The verb εὐδοκῆσα (eudokēsa) in collocation with εἰς ὃν (eis hon) could either mean “in whom I am well-pleased, delighted” (in which case the preposition functions like ἐν [en]), or “on whom I have set my favor.”

**sn** This is my beloved Son, in whom I am delighted alludes to the Transfiguration. However, the author’s version is markedly different from the synoptic accounts (in particular his introductory phrase, “when that voice was conveyed to him,” an unusual expression [perhaps used to avoid naming God directly as the one who spoke from heaven]). The most natural explanation for such differences is that he was unaware of the exact wording of the Gospels. This is, of course, easier to explain if 2 Peter is authentic than if it is a late document, written in the 2nd century.

voice was conveyed from heaven, we ourselves<sup>1</sup> heard it, for we were with him on the holy mountain.<sup>2</sup> **1:19** Moreover,<sup>3</sup> we<sup>4</sup> possess the prophetic word as an altogether reliable thing.<sup>5</sup> You do well if you pay attention<sup>6</sup> to this<sup>7</sup> as you

would<sup>8</sup> to a light shining in a murky place, until the day dawns and the morning star<sup>9</sup> rises in your hearts.<sup>10</sup> **1:20** Above all, you do well if you recognize<sup>11</sup> this:<sup>12</sup> No prophecy of scripture ever comes about by the prophet's own imagination,<sup>13</sup> **1:21** for no prophecy was ever borne of

<sup>1</sup> **tn** The "we" in v. 18 is evidently exclusive, that is, it refers to Peter and the other apostles.

<sup>2</sup> **tn** 2 Pet 1:17-18 comprise one sentence in Greek, with the main verb "heard" in v. 18. All else is temporally subordinate to that statement. Hence, more literally these verses read as follows: "For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, when that voice was conveyed to him by the Majestic Glory: 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am delighted,' we ourselves heard this voice when it was conveyed from heaven, when we were with him on the holy mountain."

<sup>3</sup> **tn** Grk "and." The use of καί (*kai*) is of course quite elastic. Only the context can determine if it is adversative, continuative, transitional, etc.

<sup>4</sup> **sn** We in v. 19 is apparently an inclusive "we" (the author and his audience). Such shifts in the first person plural are quite common in epistolary literature (cf., e.g., 2 Cor 10-13, *passim*).

<sup>5</sup> **tn** The comparative adjective βεβαιότερον (*bebaiōteron*) is the complement to the object τὸν προφητικὸν λόγον (*ton prophētikon logon*). As such, the construction almost surely has the force "The prophetic word is (more certain/altogether certain) – and this is something that we all have." Many scholars prefer to read the construction as saying "we have the prophetic word *made* more sure," but such a nuance is unparalleled in object-complement constructions (when the construction has this force, ποιῶ [*poiō*] is present [as in 2 Pet 1:10]). The meaning, as construed in the translation, is that the Bible (in this case, the OT) that these believers had in their hands was a thoroughly reliable guide. Whether it was *more certain* than was even Peter's experience on the Mount of Transfiguration depends on whether the adjective should be taken as a true comparative ("more certain") or as an elative ("very certain, altogether certain"). Some would categorically object to any experience functioning as a confirmation of the scriptures and hence would tend to give the adjective a comparative force. Yet the author labors to show that his gospel is trustworthy precisely because he was an eyewitness of this great event. Further, to say that the OT scriptures (the most likely meaning of "the prophetic word") were more trustworthy than an apostle's own experience of Christ is both to misconstrue how prophecy took place in the OT (did not the prophets have visions or other experiences?) and to deny the final revelation of God in Christ (cf. Heb 1:2). In sum, since syntactically the meaning that "we have confirmed the prophetic word by our experience" is improbable, and since contextually the meaning that "we have something that is a more reliable authority than experience, namely, the Bible" is unlikely, we are left with the meaning "we have a very reliable authority, the Old Testament, as a witness to Christ's return." No comparison is thus explicitly made. This fits both the context and normal syntax quite well. The introductory καί (*kai*) suggests that the author is adding to his argument. He makes the statement that Christ will return, and backs it up with two points: (1) Peter himself (as well as the other apostles) was an eyewitness to the Transfiguration, which is a precursor to the Parousia; and (2) the Gentile believers, who were not on the Mount of Transfiguration, nevertheless have the Old Testament, a wholly reliable authority that also promises the return of Christ.

<sup>6</sup> **tn** Grk "paying attention" (the adverbial participle is either conditional ["if you pay attention"] or instrumental ["by paying attention"]); though there is difference in translation, there is virtually no difference in application). On a lexical level, "pay attention to" (προσεχῶ [*prosechō*]) does not, in a context such as this, mean merely observe or notice, but *follow, give heed to, obey*.

<sup>7</sup> **tn** "To this" is a relative pronoun in Greek. The second half of v. 19 is thus a relative clause. Literally it reads "to which you do well if you pay attention."

<sup>8</sup> **tn** Grk "as"; ὡς (*hōs*) clauses after imperatives or implied commands (as here) make a comparison of what should be true (imperative) to what is true (indicative). This is the case even when the verb of the ὡς clause is only implied. Cf. Matt 6:10 ("may your will be done on earth as [it is] in heaven"); 10:16 ("be wise as serpents [are], and be as gentle as doves [are]"); 22:39 ("love your neighbor as [you already do] love yourself").

<sup>9</sup> **sn** The reference to the *morning star* constitutes a double entendre. First, the term was normally used to refer to Venus. But the author of course has a metaphorical meaning in mind, as is obvious from the place where the morning star is to rise – "in your hearts." Most commentators see an allusion to Num 24:17 ("a star shall rise out of Jacob") in Peter's words. Early Christian exegesis saw in that passage a prophecy about Christ's coming. Hence, in this verse Peter tells his audience to heed the OT scriptures which predict the return of Christ, then alludes to one of the passages that does this very thing, all the while running the theme of light on a parallel track. In addition, it may be significant that Peter's choice of terms here is not the same as is found in the LXX. He has used a Hellenistic word that was sometimes used of emperors and deities, perhaps as a further polemic against the paganism of his day.

<sup>10</sup> **sn** The phrase *in your hearts* is sometimes considered an inappropriate image for the *parousia*, since the coming of Christ will be visible to all. But Peter's point has to do with full comprehension of the revelation of Christ, something only believers will experience. Further, his use of light imagery is doing double-duty, suggesting two things at once (i.e., internal guidance to truth or illumination, and OT prophecy about Christ's return) and hence can not be expected to be consistent with every point he wishes to make.

<sup>11</sup> **tn** Grk "knowing this [to be] foremost." Τοῦτο πρῶτον (*touto prōton*) constitute the object and complement of γινώσκοντες (*ginōskontes*). The participle is dependent on the main verb in v. 19 ("you do well [if you pay attention]"), probably in a conditional usage. An alternative is to take it imperatively: "Above all, know this." In this rendering, πρῶτον is functioning adverbially. Only here and 2 Pet 3:3 is τοῦτο πρῶτον found in the NT, making a decision more difficult.

<sup>12</sup> **tn** The ὅτι (*hoti*) clause is appositional ("know this, that"). English usage can use the colon with the same force.

<sup>13</sup> **tn** Verse 20 is variously interpreted. There are three key terms here that help decide both the interpretation and the translation. As well, the relation to v. 21 informs the meaning of this verse. (1) The term "comes about" (γίνεται [*ginetai*]) is often translated "is a matter" as in "is a matter of one's own interpretation." But the progressive force for this verb is far more common. (2) The adjective ἰδίος (*idios*) has been understood to mean (a) one's own (i.e., the reader's own), (b) its own (i.e., the particular prophecy's own), or (c) the prophet's own. Catholic scholarship has tended to see the reference to the reader (in the sense that no individual reader can understand scripture, but needs the interpretations handed down by the Church), while older Protestant scholarship has tended to see the reference to the individual passage being prophesied (and hence the Reformation doctrine of *analogia fidei* [analogy of faith], or scripture interpreting scripture). But neither of these views satisfactorily addresses the relationship of v. 20 to v. 21, nor do they do full justice to the meaning of γίνεται. (3) The meaning of ἐπίλυσις (*epilysis*) is difficult to determine, since it is a biblical *hapax legomenon*. Though it is sometimes used in the sense of interpretation in extra-biblical Greek, this is by no means a necessary sense. The basic idea of the word is *unfolding*, which can either indicate an explanation or a creation. It sometimes has the force of *solution* or even *spell*, both of which meanings could easily accommodate a prophetic utterance of some sort. Further, even the

human impulse; rather, men<sup>1</sup> carried along by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

*The False Teachers' Ungodly Lifestyle*

**2:1** But false prophets arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you.<sup>2</sup> These false teachers<sup>3</sup> will<sup>4</sup> infiltrate your midst<sup>5</sup> with destructive heresies,<sup>6</sup> even to the point of<sup>7</sup> denying the Master who bought them.

As a result, they will bring<sup>8</sup> swift destruction on themselves. **2:2** And many will follow their debauched lifestyles.<sup>9</sup> Because of these false teachers,<sup>10</sup> the way of truth will be slandered.<sup>11</sup> **2:3** And in their greed they will exploit you with deceptive words. Their<sup>12</sup> condemnation pronounced long ago<sup>13</sup> is not sitting idly by;<sup>14</sup> their<sup>15</sup> destruction is not asleep.

**2:4** For if God did not spare the angels who sinned,<sup>16</sup> but threw them into hell<sup>17</sup> and locked them up<sup>18</sup> in chains<sup>19</sup> in utter darkness,<sup>20</sup> to be

meaning explanation or interpretation easily fits a prophetic utterance, for prophets often, if not usually, explained visions and dreams. There is no instance of this word referring to the interpretation of scripture, however, suggesting that if interpretation is the meaning, it is the prophet's interpretation of his own vision. (4) The γάρ (*gar*) at the beginning of v. 21 gives the basis for the proposition in v. 20. The connection that makes the most satisfactory sense is that prophets did not invent their own prophecies (v. 20), for their impulse for prophesying came from God (v. 21).

**sn** No prophecy of scripture ever comes about by the prophet's own imagination. 2 Pet 1:20-21, then, form an *inclusio* with v. 16: The Christian's faith and hope are not based on cleverly concocted fables but on the sure Word of God – one which the prophets, prompted by the Spirit of God, spoke. Peter's point is the same as is found elsewhere in the NT, i.e., that human prophets did not *originate* the message, but they did convey it, using their own personalities in the process.

**1** **tn** If, as seems probable, the "prophecy" mentioned here is to be identified with the "prophecy of scripture" mentioned in the previous verse, then the Greek term ἄνθρωποι (*anthrōpoi*, "men") would refer specifically to the human authors of scripture, who (as far as we know) were all men. Thus "men" has been used here in the translation. If, on the other hand, the "prophecy" mentioned in the present verse is not limited to scripture but refers to oral prophecy as well, then women would be included, since Joel 2:20 specifically mentions "sons and daughters" as having the ability to prophesy, and the NT clearly mentions prophetesses (Luke 2:36; Acts 21:9).

**2** **sn** There will be false teachers among you. Peter uses the same verb, γίνομαι (*ginomai*), in 2 Pet 2:1 as he had used in 1:20 to describe the process of inspiration. He may well be contrasting, by way of a catchword, the two kinds of prophets.

**3** **tn** Grk "who"; verse 1 is one sentence in Greek, the second half constituting a relative clause.

**4** **sn** By the use of the future tense (*will infiltrate*), Peter is boldly prophesying the role that false teachers will have before these Gentile believers. It was necessary for him to establish both his own credentials and to anchor his audience's faith in the written Word before he could get to this point, for these false teachers will question both.

**5** **tn** Grk "will bring in," often with the connotation of secretiveness; "your midst" is implied.

**6** **tn** Or "destructive opinions." "destructive viewpoints." The genitive ἀπωλείας (*apōleias*) could be taken either attributively ("destructive") or as a genitive of destination ("leading to destruction"). Although the preferable interpretation is a genitive of destination, especially because of the elaboration given at the end of the verse ("bringing swift destruction on themselves"), translating it attributively is less cumbersome in English. Either way, the net result is the same.

**7** **tn** Grk "even." The καί (*hai*) is ascensive, suggesting that the worst heresy is mentioned in the words that follow.

**8** **tn** Grk "bringing." The present participle ἐπάγοντες (*epagontes*) indicates the result of the preceding clause.

**9** **tn** "Debauched lifestyles" is literally "licentiousnesses," "sensualityes," "debaucheries."

**10** **tn** Grk "because of whom," introducing a subordinate clause to the first part of the verse.

**11** **tn** Or "blasphemed," "reviled," "treated with contempt."

**12** **tn** Grk "to whom," introducing a subordinate relative clause.

**13** **tn** Grk "the ancient judgment."

**14** **tn** Grk "is not idle."

**15** **tn** Greek has "and their." As introducing a synonymous parallel, it is superfluous in English.

**16** **tn** The participle ἁμαρτησάντων (*hamartēsantōn*) could either be attributive ("who sinned") or adverbial ("when they sinned"). The relation to the judgment of the false teachers in v. 3 suggests that the objects of God's judgment are not in question, but the time frame for the execution of justice is. If the participle is taken temporally, the point of comparison is not as acute. The objection that the illustrations following (the flood, Sodom and Gomorrah) are viewed temporally does not mitigate this translation, for in both instances only the time of executing judgment is in view. Further, in both instances the OT notes that God withheld punishment for a long time.

**17** **tn** Grk "casting them into Tartarus" or "holding them captive in Tartarus." This verb, τάρταρόω (*tartarōō*), occurs only here in the NT, but its meaning is clearly established in both Hellenistic and Jewish literature. "Tartarus [was] thought of by the Greeks as a subterranean place lower than Hades where divine punishment was meted out, and so regarded in Israelite apocalyptic as well" (BDAG 991 s.v.). Grammatically, it has been translated as an indicative because it is an attendant circumstance participle.

**18** **tn** Grk "handed them over."

**19** **tc** The reading σειραῖς (*seirais*, "chains") is found in Ƴ27 P Ψ 33 1739 Ƴt vg sy, while σιροῖς [*sirois* [or σειροῖς, *seirois*], "pits") is found in A B C 81 pc. The evidence is thus fairly evenly divided. Internally, the reading adopted here (σειραῖς) is a rarer term, perhaps prompting some scribes to replace it with the more common word. However, this more common term is not a synonym and hence does not follow the normal pattern of scribes. As well, the use of the genitive ζόφου (*zophou*) in "chains of darkness" is a bit awkward (a rare genitive of place), perhaps prompting some scribes to change the imagery to "pits of darkness" (in which case ζόφου is an attributive genitive). A further point that complicates the issue is the relationship of 2 Peter to Jude. Jude's parallel (v. 6) has δεσμοῖς (*desmois*, "chains"). Apart from the issue of whether 2 Peter used Jude or Jude used 2 Peter, this parallel suggests one of two possibilities: either (1) since these two books obviously have a literary relationship, σειραῖς is original, or (2) early scribes, recognizing that these two books shared their material, changed σειροῖς to σειραῖς to conform to the wording, at least conceptually, to Jude 6. On balance, σειραῖς looks to be original because scribes were not prone to harmonize extensively between books other than the Gospels (although 2 Peter and Jude do display some of this harmonizing). Further, such harmonization is often, if not usually, verbally exact, but δεσμοῖς is not a variant here.

**20** **tn** The genitive ζόφου (*zophou*) is taken as a genitive of place. See previous note for discussion.

kept until the judgment, 2:5 and if he did not spare the ancient world, but did protect Noah, a herald of righteousness, along with seven others,<sup>1</sup> when God<sup>2</sup> brought a flood on an ungodly world,<sup>3</sup> 2:6 and if he turned to ashes the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah when he condemned them to destruction,<sup>4</sup> having appointed<sup>5</sup> them to serve as an example<sup>6</sup> to future generations of the ungodly,<sup>7</sup> 2:7 and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man in anguish over the debauched lifestyle of lawless<sup>8</sup> men,<sup>9</sup> 2:8 (for while he lived among them day after day, that righteous man was tormented in his righteous soul<sup>10</sup> by the lawless deeds he saw and heard<sup>11</sup>) 2:9 – if so,<sup>12</sup> then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from their trials,<sup>13</sup> and to reserve the unrighteous for punishment<sup>14</sup> at the day of judgment, 2:10 especially

<sup>1</sup> **tn** “Along with seven others” is implied in the cryptic, “the eighth, Noah.” A more literal translation thus would be, “he did protect Noah [as] the eighth...”

<sup>2</sup> **tn** Grk “he”; the referent (God) has been repeated here for clarity, although this is somewhat redundant with the beginning of v. 4.

<sup>3</sup> **tn** Grk “a world of the ungodly.”

<sup>4</sup> **tc** Several important witnesses omit καταστροφή (*katastrophē*, “destruction”; such as  $\Psi^{72}$  B C\* 1241 1739 1881 pc), but this is probably best explained as an accidental omission due to homoioarcton (the word following is κατέκρινεν [*katekrinen*], “he condemned”).

<sup>5</sup> **tn** Or “ruin,” or “extinction.” The first part of this verse more literally reads “And [if] he condemned to annihilation the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, by turning them to ashes.”

<sup>6</sup> **sn** The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is detailed in Gen 18:16–19:29.

<sup>7</sup> **tn** The perfect participle τεθεικώς (*tetheikōs*) suggests an antecedent act. More idiomatically, the idea seems to be, “because he had already appointed them to serve as an example.”

<sup>8</sup> **tn** “To serve as” is not in Greek but is implied in the object-complement construction.

<sup>9</sup> **tn** Grk “an example of the things coming to the ungodly,” or perhaps “an example to the ungodly of coming [ages].”

<sup>10</sup> **tn** Or “unprincipled.”

<sup>11</sup> **tn** Or “ruin.” This verse more literally reads “And [if] he rescued righteous Lot, who was deeply distressed by the lifestyle of the lawless in [their] debauchery.”

<sup>12</sup> **tn** Grk “that righteous man tormented his righteous soul.”

<sup>13</sup> **tn** Grk “by lawless deeds, in seeing and hearing [them].”

<sup>14</sup> **tn** The Greek is one long conditional sentence, from v. 4 to v. 10a. 2 Pet 2:4-8 constitute the protasis; vv. 9 and 10a, the apodosis. In order to show this connection more clearly, a resumptive summary protasis – “if so,” or “if God did these things” – is needed in English translation.

<sup>15</sup> **tn** Grk “from trial,” or possibly “from temptation” (though this second meaning for πειρασμός (*peirasmos*) does not fit the context in which Noah and Lot are seen as in the midst of trials, not temptation).

<sup>16</sup> **tn** The adverbial participle κολαζομένου (*kolazomenous*) can refer either to contemporaneous time or subsequent time. At stake is the meaning of the following prepositional phrase (at the day of judgment or until the day of judgment). If the participle is contemporaneous, the idea is “to keep the ungodly in a state of punishment until the day of judgment.” If subsequent, the meaning is “to keep the ungodly to be punished at the day of judgment.” Many commentators/translators opt for the first view, assuming that the present participle cannot be used of subsequent time. However, the present participle is the normal one used for result, and is often used of purpose (cf., e.g., for present participles suggesting result, Mark 9:7; Luke 4:15; John 5:18; Eph 2:15; 2 Pet 2:1, mentioned above; for present participles indicating purpose, note Luke 10:25; John 12:33; Acts 3:26; 2 Pet 2:10 [as even most translations render it]). Further, the con-

text supports this: 2:1-10 forms something of an *inclusio*, in which the final end of the false teachers is mentioned specifically in v. 1, then as a general principle in v. 9. The point of v. 3 – that the punishment of the false teachers is certain, even though the sentence has not yet been carried out, is underscored by a participle of purpose in v. 9.

<sup>17</sup> **tn** Grk “those who go after the flesh in [its] lust.”

<sup>18</sup> **tn** There is no “and” in Greek; it is supplied for the sake of English convention.

<sup>19</sup> **tn** The translation takes βλασφημούντες (*blasphēmountes*) as an adverbial participle of purpose, as most translations do. However, it is also possible to see this temporally (thus, “they do not tremble when they blaspheme”).

<sup>20</sup> **tn** Δόξας (*doxas*) almost certainly refers to angelic beings rather than mere human authorities, though it is difficult to tell whether good or bad angels are in view. Verse 11 seems to suggest that wicked angels is what the author intends.

<sup>21</sup> **tn** Grk “whereas.”

<sup>22</sup> **tn** Grk “who are greater in strength and power.” What is being compared, however, could either be the false teachers or “the glorious ones,” in which case “angels” would refer to good angels and “the glorious ones” to evil angels.

<sup>23</sup> **tn** Or “insulting.” The word comes from the same root as the term found in v. 10 (“insult”), v. 12 (“insulting”), and v. 2 (“will be slandered”). The author is fond of building his case by the repetition of a word in a slightly different context so that the readers make the necessary connection. English usage cannot always convey this connection because a given word in one language cannot always be translated the same way in another.

<sup>24</sup> **tc** † Some witnesses lack παρά κυρίῳ (*para kuriō*; so A  $\Psi$  33 81 1505 1881 2464 al vg co), while others have the genitive παρά κυρίου (*para kuriou*; so  $\Psi^{72}$  1241 al sy<sup>ph</sup>h<sup>m</sup>). The majority of witnesses (including  $\aleph$  B C P 1739  $\aleph$ ) read the dative παρά κυρίῳ. The genitive expression suggests that angels would not pronounce a judgment on “the glorious ones” from the Lord, while the dative indicates that angels would not pronounce a judgment on “the glorious ones” in the presence of the Lord. The parallel in Jude 9 speaks of a reviling judgment against the devil in which the prepositional phrase is entirely absent. At the same time, in that parallel Michael does say, “The Lord rebuke you.” (Hence, he is offering something of a judgment from the Lord.) The best options externally are the dative or the omission of the phrase, but a decision is difficult. Internally, the omission may possibly be a motivated reading in that it finds a parallel in Jude 9 (where no prepositional phrase is used). All things considered, the dative is to be preferred, though with much reservation.

<sup>25</sup> **tn** 2 Pet 2:12 through 16 constitute one cumbersome sentence in Greek. It is difficult to tell whether a hard break belongs in the middle of v. 13, as the translation has it, or whether the compounding of participles is meant in a loosely descriptive sort of way, without strong grammatical connection. Either way, the sentence rambles in a way that often betrays a great “vehemence of spirit” (A. T. Robertson, *Grammar*, 435). The author is obviously agitated at these false teachers who are to come.

<sup>26</sup> **tn** The false teachers could conceivably be men or women, but in v. 14 they are said to have eyes “full of an adulteress.” This can only refer to men. Hence, both here and in v. 17 the false teachers are described as “men.”

irrational animals – creatures of instinct, born to be caught and destroyed<sup>1</sup> – do not understand whom<sup>2</sup> they are insulting, and consequently<sup>3</sup> in their destruction they will be destroyed.<sup>4</sup> **2:13** suffering harm as the wages for their harmful ways.<sup>5</sup> By considering it a pleasure to carouse in broad daylight,<sup>6</sup> they are stains and blemishes, indulging<sup>7</sup> in their deceitful pleasures when they feast together with you. **2:14** Their eyes,<sup>8</sup> full of adultery,<sup>9</sup> never stop sinning;<sup>10</sup> they entice<sup>11</sup> unstable people.<sup>12</sup> They have trained their hearts for greed, these cursed children!<sup>13</sup> **2:15** By forsaking the right path they have gone astray, because they followed the way of Balaam son of Bosor,<sup>14</sup> who loved the wages of unrighteousness,<sup>15</sup>

**2:16** yet was rebuked<sup>16</sup> for his own transgression (a dumb donkey,<sup>17</sup> speaking with a human voice,<sup>18</sup> restrained the prophet's madness).<sup>19</sup>

**2:17** These men<sup>20</sup> are waterless springs and mists driven by a storm, for whom the utter depths of darkness<sup>21</sup> have been reserved. **2:18** For by speaking high-sounding but empty words<sup>22</sup> they are able to entice,<sup>23</sup> with fleshly desires and with debauchery,<sup>24</sup> people<sup>25</sup> who have just escaped<sup>26</sup> from those who reside in error.<sup>27</sup> **2:19** Although these false teachers promise<sup>28</sup> such people<sup>29</sup> freedom, they themselves are enslaved to<sup>30</sup> immorality.<sup>31</sup> For whatever a person succumbs to, to that he is enslaved.<sup>32</sup> **2:20** For if after they have escaped the filthy things<sup>33</sup> of the world through the rich knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,<sup>34</sup> they<sup>35</sup> again get entangled in them and succumb to

<sup>1</sup> **tn** Grk "born for capture and destruction."

<sup>2</sup> **tn** Grk "with [reference to] whom."

<sup>3</sup> **tn** There is no conjunction joining this last clause of v. 12 to the preceding (i.e., no "and consequently"). The argument builds *asyndetically* (a powerful rhetorical device in Greek), but cannot be naturally expressed in English as such.

<sup>4</sup> **tn** This cryptic expression has been variously interpreted. (1) It could involve a simple cognate dative in which case the idea is "they will be utterly destroyed." But the presence of αὐτῶν (*autōn*; *their, of them*) is problematic for this view. Other, more plausible views are: (2) the false teachers will be destroyed at the same time as the irrational beasts, or (3) in the same manner as these creatures (i.e., by being caught); or (4) the false teachers will be destroyed together with the evil angels whom they insult. Because of the difficulties of the text, it was thought best to leave it ambiguous, as the Greek has it.

<sup>5</sup> **tn** There is a play on words in Greek, but this is difficult to express adequately in English. The verb ἀδικέω (*adikēō*) as a passive means "to suffer harm," or "to suffer an injustice." The noun ἀδικία (*adikia*) means "unrighteousness." Since the Greek verb has a wider field of meaning than the English, to translate it as *suffer an injustice* is unwarranted, for it implicitly attributes evil to God. As R. Bauckham notes, "in English it is impossible to translate ἀδικούμενοι as a morally neutral term and ἀδικίας with a morally pejorative term, while retaining the play on words" (*Jude, 2 Peter* [WBC], 265).

<sup>6</sup> **tn** Grk "considering carousing in the daytime a pleasure."

<sup>7</sup> **tn** Or "carousing," "reveling." The participle ἐντροφῶντες (*entrophōntes*) is a cognate to the noun τροφή (*truphē*, "carousing") used earlier in the verse.

<sup>8</sup> **tn** Grk "having eyes." See note on "men" at the beginning of v. 12.

<sup>9</sup> **tn** Grk "full of an adulteress."

<sup>10</sup> **tn** Grk "and unceasing from sin." Some translate this "insatiable for sin," but such a translation is based on a textual variant with inadequate support.

<sup>11</sup> **tn** Grk "enticing." See note on "men" at the beginning of v. 12.

<sup>12</sup> **tn** "People" is literally "souls." The term ψυχή (*psuchē*) can refer to one's soul, one's life, or oneself.

<sup>13</sup> **tn** Grk "having hearts trained in greediness, children of cursing." The participles continue the general description of the false teachers, without strong grammatical connection. The genitive κατάρας (*kataras*, "of cursing") is taken attributively here.

<sup>14</sup> **tn** Although many modern translations (e.g., NASB, TEV, NIV, CEV, NLT) read "Beor" here, this is due to harmonization with the OT rather than following a variant textual reading. The Greek text of NA<sup>27</sup> reads "Bosor," an otherwise unattested form of the name of Balaam's father.

<sup>15</sup> **tn** "Wages of unrighteousness" in Greek is the same expression found in v. 13, "wages for harmful ways." The repetition makes the link between the false teachers and Balaam more concrete.

<sup>16</sup> **tn** Grk "but he had a rebuke."

<sup>17</sup> **tn** The Greek word ἄφωνος (*aphōnos*) means "mute, silent" or "incapable of speech." For reasons of English style the word "dumb" was used in the translation. Despite the potential for misunderstanding (since "dumb" can refer to a lack of intellectual capability) more dynamic glosses were judged to be inelegant.

<sup>18</sup> **tn** Grk "a voice of a (man/person)."

<sup>19</sup> **sn** Balaam's activities are detailed in Num 22–24 (see also Num 31:8, 16).

<sup>20</sup> **tn** Although some translations have simply "these" or "these people," since in v. 14 they are described as having eyes "full of an adulteress," men are in view.

<sup>21</sup> **tn** Grk "utter darkness of darkness." Verse 4 speaks of wicked angels presently in "chains of utter darkness," while the final fate of the false teachers is a darker place still.

<sup>22</sup> **tn** Grk "high-sounding words of futility."

<sup>23</sup> **tn** Grk "they entice."

<sup>24</sup> **tn** Grk "with the lusts of the flesh, with debauchery."

<sup>25</sup> **tn** Grk "those."

<sup>26</sup> **tn** Or "those who are barely escaping."

<sup>27</sup> **tn** Or "deceit."

<sup>28</sup> **tn** Verse 19 is a subordinate clause in Greek. The masculine nominative participle "promising" (ἐπαγγελλόμενοι, *epangellomenoi*) refers back to the subject of vv. 17–18. At the same time, it functions subordinately to the following participle, ὑπάρχοντες (*huparchontes*, "while being").

<sup>29</sup> **tn** Grk "them."

<sup>30</sup> **tn** Grk "slaves of." See the note on the word "slave" in 1:1.

<sup>31</sup> **tn** Or "corruption," "depravity." Verse 19 constitutes a subordinate clause to v. 18 in Greek. The main verbal components of these two verses are: "uttering...they entice...promising...being (enslaved)." The main verb is (they) *entice*. The three participles are adverbial and seem to indicate an instrumental relation (by uttering), a concessive relation (although promising), and a temporal relation (while being [enslaved]). For the sake of English usage, in the translation of the text this is broken down into two sentences.

<sup>32</sup> **tn** Grk "for by what someone is overcome, to this he is enslaved."

<sup>33</sup> **tn** Grk "defilements"; "contaminations"; "pollutions."

<sup>34</sup> **sn** *Through the rich knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.* The implication is not that these people necessarily knew the Lord (in the sense of being saved), but that they were in the circle of those who had embraced Christ as Lord and Savior.

<sup>35</sup> **tn** Grk "(and/but) they."

them.<sup>1</sup> their last state has become worse for them than their first. **2:21** For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than, having known it, to turn back from the holy commandment that had been delivered to them. **2:22** They are illustrations of this true proverb:<sup>2</sup> “*A dog returns to its own vomit,*”<sup>3</sup> and “*A sow, after washing herself,*<sup>4</sup> wallows in the mire.”<sup>5</sup>

*The False Teachers' Denial of the Lord's Return*

**3:1** Dear friends, this is already the second letter I have written<sup>6</sup> you, in which<sup>7</sup> I am trying to stir up<sup>8</sup> your pure mind by way of reminder: **3:2** I want you to recall<sup>9</sup> both<sup>10</sup> the predictions<sup>11</sup> foretold by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles.<sup>12</sup> **3:3** Above all, understand

<sup>1</sup> **tn** Grk “they again, after becoming entangled in them, are overcome by them.”

<sup>2</sup> **tn** Grk “the [statement] of the true proverb has happened to them.” The idiom in Greek cannot be translated easily in English.

<sup>3</sup> **tn** The quotation is a loose rendering of Prov 26:11. This proverb involves a participle that is translated like a finite verb (“returns”). In the LXX this line constitutes a subordinate and dependent clause. But since the line has been lifted from its original context, it has been translated as an independent statement.

<sup>4</sup> **tn** Or “after being washed.” The middle verb may be direct (“wash oneself”) or permissive (“allow oneself to be washed”).

<sup>5</sup> **tn** The source of this quotation is uncertain. Heraclitus has often been mentioned as a possible source, but this is doubtful. Other options on the translation of the second line include a sow, *having (once) bathed herself (in mud), (returns) to wallowing in the mire, or a sow that washes herself by wallowing in the mire* (BDAG 181 s.v. βόρβορος). The advantage of this last translation is that no verbs need to be supplied for it to make sense. The disadvantage is that in this context it does not make any contribution to the argument. Since the source of the quotation is not known, there is some guesswork involved in the reconstruction. Most commentators prefer a translation similar to the one in the text above.

<sup>6</sup> **tn** Grk “I am already writing this [as] a second letter.” The object-complement construction is more smoothly rendered in English a bit differently. Further, although the present tense γράφω (*graphō*) is used here, English convention employs an epistolary past tense. (The Greek epistolary aorist might have been expected here, but it also occurs in situations unlike its English counterparts.)

<sup>7</sup> **tn** The relative pronoun is plural, indicating that the following statement is true about both letters.

<sup>8</sup> **tn** Or “I have stirred up, aroused.” The translation treats the present tense verb as a conative present.

<sup>9</sup> **tn** Grk “to remember.” “I want you” is supplied to smooth out the English. The Greek infinitive is subordinate to the previous clause.

<sup>10</sup> **tn** “Both” is not in Greek; it is supplied to show more clearly that there are two objects of the infinitive “to remember” – predictions and commandment.

<sup>11</sup> **tn** Grk “words.” In conjunction with πρόειπον (*proeipon*), however, the meaning of the construction is that the prophets uttered prophecies.

<sup>12</sup> **sn** *Holy prophets...apostles.* The first chapter demonstrated that the OT prophets were trustworthy guides (1:19-21) and that the NT apostles were also authoritative (1:16-18). Now, using the same catch phrase found in the Greek text of 1:20 (τούτο πρῶτον γινώσκοντες, *touto prōton ginōskontes*), Peter points to specific prophecies of the prophets as an argument against the false teachers.

this.<sup>13</sup> In the last days blatant scoffers<sup>14</sup> will come, being propelled by their own evil urges<sup>15</sup> **3:4** and saying,<sup>16</sup> “Where is his promised return?”<sup>17</sup> For ever since<sup>18</sup> our ancestors<sup>19</sup> died,<sup>20</sup> all things have continued as they were<sup>21</sup> from the beginning of creation.” **3:5** For they deliberately suppress this fact,<sup>22</sup> that by the word of God<sup>23</sup> heavens existed long ago and an earth<sup>24</sup> was formed out of water and by means of water. **3:6** Through these things<sup>25</sup> the world existing at that time was destroyed when it was deluged with water. **3:7** But by the same word the present heavens and earth have been reserved for fire, by being kept

<sup>13</sup> **tn** Grk “knowing this [to be] foremost.” Τούτο πρῶτον (*touto prōton*) constitute the object and complement of γινώσκοντες (*ginōskontes*). The participle is loosely dependent on the infinitive in v. 2 (“I want you to recall”), perhaps in a telic sense (thus, “[I want you] to recall...[and especially] to understand this as foremost”). The following statement then would constitute the main predictions with which the author was presently concerned. An alternative is to take it imperatively: “Above all, know this.” In this instance, however, there is little semantic difference (since a telic participle and imperatival participle end up urging an action). Cf. also 2 Pet 1:20.

<sup>14</sup> **tn** The Greek reads “scoffers in their scoffing” for “blatant scoffers.” The use of the cognate dative is a Semitism designed to intensify the word it is related to. The idiom is foreign to English. As a Semitism, it is further incidental evidence of the authenticity of the letter (see the note on “Simeon” in 1:1 for other evidence).

<sup>15</sup> **tn** Grk “going according to their own evil urges.”

<sup>16</sup> **tn** The present participle λέγοντες (*legontes*, “saying”) most likely indicates result. Thus, their denial of the Lord’s return is the result of their lifestyle. The connection to the false teachers of chapter 2 is thus made clear.

<sup>17</sup> **tn** Grk “Where is the promise of his coming?” The genitive παρουσίας (*parousias*, “coming, advent, return”) is best taken as an attributed genitive (in which the head noun, *promise*, functions semantically as an adjective; see *ExSyn* 89-91).

<sup>18</sup> **tn** The prepositional phrase with the relative pronoun, ἀφ’ ἧς (*aph’ hēs*), is used adverbially or conjunctively without antecedent (see BDAG 727 s.v. ὅς 1.k.).

<sup>19</sup> **tn** Grk “fathers.” The reference could be either to the OT patriarchs or first generation Christians. This latter meaning, however, is unattested in any other early Christian literature.

<sup>20</sup> **tn** The verb κοιμάω (*koimaō*) literally means “sleep,” but it is often used in the Bible as a euphemism for the death of a believer.

<sup>21</sup> **tn** Grk “thus,” “in the same manner.”

<sup>22</sup> **tn** The Greek is difficult at this point. An alternative is “Even though they maintain this, it escapes them that...” Literally the idea seems to be: “For this escapes these [men] who wish [it to be so].”

<sup>23</sup> **tn** The word order in Greek places “the word of God” at the end of the sentence. See discussion in the note on “these things” in v. 6.

<sup>24</sup> **tn** Or “land,” “the earth.”

<sup>25</sup> **tn** The antecedent is ambiguous. It could refer to the heavens, the heavens and earth, or the water and the word. If the reference is to the heavens, the author is reflecting on the Genesis account about “the floodgates of the heavens” being opened (Gen 7:11). If the reference is to the heavens and earth, he is also thinking about the cosmic upheaval that helped to produce the flood (Gen 6:11). If the reference is to the water and the word, he is indicating both the means (water) and the cause (word of God). This last interpretation is the most likely since the final nouns of v. 5 are “water” and “word of God,” making them the nearest antecedents.

for the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.<sup>1</sup>

**3:8** Now, dear friends, do not let this one thing escape your notice,<sup>2</sup> that a single day is like a thousand years with the Lord and a thousand years are like a single day. **3:9** The Lord is not slow concerning his promise,<sup>3</sup> as some regard slowness, but is being patient toward you, because he does not wish<sup>4</sup> for any<sup>5</sup> to perish but for all to come to repentance.<sup>6</sup> **3:10** But the day of the Lord will come like a thief; when it comes,<sup>7</sup> the heavens will disappear<sup>8</sup> with a

horrific noise,<sup>9</sup> and the celestial bodies<sup>10</sup> will melt away<sup>11</sup> in a blaze,<sup>12</sup> and the earth and every deed done on it<sup>13</sup> will be laid bare.<sup>14</sup> **3:11** Since all these things are to melt away<sup>15</sup> in this manner,<sup>16</sup> what sort of people must we<sup>17</sup> be,

**1 tn** Grk “the ungodly people.”

**2 tn** The same verb, λανθάνω (*lanthanō*, “escape”) used in v. 5 is found here (there, translated “suppress”).

**3 tn** Or perhaps, “the Lord is not delaying [the fulfillment of] his promise,” or perhaps “the Lord of the promise is not delaying.” The verb can mean “to delay,” “to be slow,” or “to be hesitant.”

**4 tn** Grk “not wishing.” The participle most likely has a causal force, explaining why the Lord is patient.

**5 sn** *He does not wish for any to perish.* This verse has been a battleground between Arminians and Calvinists. The former argue that God wants all people to be saved, but either through inability or restriction of his own sovereignty does not interfere with peoples’ wills. Some of the latter argue that the “any” here means “any of you” and that all the elect will repent before the return of Christ, because this is God’s will. Both of these positions have problems. The “any” in this context means “any of you.” (This can be seen by the dependent participle which gives the reason why the Lord is patient “toward you.”) There are hints throughout this letter that the readership may be mixed, including both true believers and others who are “sitting on the fence” as it were. But to make the equation of this readership with the elect is unlikely. This would seem to require, in its historical context, that all of these readers would be saved. But not all who attend church know the Lord or will know the Lord. Simon the Magician, whom Peter had confronted in Acts 8, is a case in point. This is evident in contemporary churches when a pastor addresses the congregation as “brothers, sisters, saints, etc.,” yet concludes the message with an evangelistic appeal. When an apostle or pastor addresses a group as “Christian” he does not necessarily think that every individual in the congregation is truly a Christian. Thus, the literary context seems to be against the Arminian view, while the historical context seems to be against (one representation of) the Calvinist view. The answer to this conundrum is found in the term “wish” (a participle in Greek from the verb *boulomai*). It often represents a mere wish, or one’s desiderative will, rather than one’s resolve. Unless God’s will is viewed on the two planes of his desiderative and decretive will (what he desires and what he decrees), hopeless confusion will result. The scriptures amply illustrate both that God sometimes decrees things that he does not desire and desires things that he does not decree. It is not that his will can be thwarted, nor that he has limited his sovereignty. But the mystery of God’s dealings with humanity is best seen if this tension is preserved. Otherwise, either God will be perceived as good but impotent or as a sovereign taskmaster. Here the idea that God does not wish for any to perish speaks only of God’s desiderative will, without comment on his decretive will.

**6 tn** Grk “reach to repentance.” Repentance thus seems to be a quantifiable state, or turning point. The verb χυπέω (*chōreō*, “reach”) typically involves the connotation of “obtain the full measure of” something. It is thus most appropriate as referring to the repentance that accompanies conversion.

**7 tn** Grk “in which.”

**8 tn** Or “pass away.”

**9 tn** Or “hissing sound,” “whirring sound,” “rushing sound,” or “loud noise.” The word occurs only here in the NT. It was often used of the crackle of a fire, as would appear appropriate in this context.

**10 tn** Grk “elements.” Most commentators are agreed that “celestial bodies” is meant, in light of this well-worn usage of στοιχεῖα (*stoicheia*) in the 2nd century and the probable allusion to Isa 34:4 (text of Vaticanus). See R. Bauckham, *Jude*, 2 *Peter* (WBC), 315-16 for discussion.

**11 tn** Grk “be dissolved.”

**12 tn** Grk “being burned up.”

**13 tn** Grk “the works in it.”

**14 tc** One of the most difficult textual problems in the NT is found in v. 10. The reading εὐρεθήσεται (*heurethēsetai*), which enjoys by far the best support (N B K P 0156<sup>vid</sup> 323 1241 1739<sup>mt</sup> pc) is nevertheless so difficult a reading that many scholars regard it as nonsensical. (NA<sup>27</sup> lists five conjectures by scholars, from Hort to Mayor, in this text.) As R. Bauckham has pointed out, solutions to the problem are of three sorts: (1) conjectural emendation (which normally speaks more of the ingenuity of the scholar who makes the proposal than of the truth of the conjecture, e.g., changing one letter in the previous word, ἔργα [*erga*] becomes ἀργα [*arga*] with the meaning, “the earth and the things in it will be found useless”); (2) adoption of one of several variant readings (all of which, however, are easier than this one and simply cannot explain how this reading arose, e.g., the reading of 17<sup>2</sup> which adds λούμενα [*luomena*] to the verb – a reading suggested no doubt by the threefold occurrence of this verb in the surrounding verses: “the earth and its works will be found dissolved”; or the simplest variant, the reading of the Sahidic MSS, οὐχ [*ouch*] preceding εὐρεθήσεται – “will not be found”); or (3) interpretive gymnastics which regards the text as settled but has to do some manipulation to its normal meaning. Bauckham puts forth an excellent case that the third option is to be preferred and that the meaning of the term is virtually the equivalent of “will be disclosed,” “will be manifested.” (That this meaning is not readily apparent may in fact have been the reason for so many variants and conjectures.) Thus, the force of the clause is that “the earth and the works [done by men] in it will be stripped bare [before God].” In addition, the unusualness of the expression is certainly in keeping with the author’s style throughout this little book. Hence, what looks to be suspect because of its abnormalities, upon closer inspection is actually in keeping with the author’s stylistic idiosyncrasies. The meaning of the text then is that all but the earth and men’s works will be destroyed. Everything will be removed so that humanity will stand naked before God. Textually, then, on both external and internal grounds, εὐρεθήσεται commends itself as the preferred reading.

**15 tn** Grk “all these things thus being dissolved.”

**16 tn** Or “thus.”

**17 tc** † Most MSS have a pronoun with the infinitive – either ὑμᾶς (*humas*, “you”); found in A C<sup>xi</sup> P Ψ 048<sup>vid</sup> 33 1739 171, as well as the corrector of 17<sup>2</sup> and second corrector of N), ἡμᾶς (*hēmas*, “we”; read by N\* 630 2464 a), or ἑαυτούς (*heautous*, “[you yourselves]/[we ourselves],” read by 1243). But the shorter reading (with no pronoun) has the support of 17<sup>2,74vid</sup> B pc. Though slim, the evidence for the omission is nevertheless the earliest. Further, the addition of some pronoun, especially the second person pronoun, seems to be a clarifying variant. It would be difficult to explain the pronoun’s absence in some witnesses if the pronoun were original. That three different pronouns have shown up in the MSS is testimony for the omission. Thus, on external and internal grounds, the omission is preferred. For English style requirements, however, some pronoun has to be added. NA<sup>27</sup> has ὑμᾶς in brackets, indicating doubt as to its authenticity.

**tn** Or “you.”

conducting our lives in holiness and godliness,<sup>1</sup> 3:12 while waiting for and hastening<sup>2</sup> the coming of the day of God?<sup>3</sup> Because of this day,<sup>4</sup> the heavens will be burned up and<sup>5</sup> dissolve, and the celestial bodies<sup>6</sup> will melt away in a blaze!<sup>7</sup> 3:13 But, according to his promise, we are waiting for<sup>8</sup> new heavens and a new earth, in which<sup>9</sup> righteousness truly resides.<sup>10</sup>

### Exhortation to the Faithful

3:14 Therefore, dear friends, since you are waiting for<sup>11</sup> these things, strive to be found<sup>12</sup> at peace, without spot or blemish, when you come into his presence.<sup>13</sup> 3:15 And regard the patience of our Lord as salvation,<sup>14</sup> just as also our dear broth-

er Paul<sup>15</sup> wrote to you,<sup>16</sup> according to the wisdom given to him, 3:16 speaking of these things in all his letters.<sup>17</sup> Some things in these letters<sup>18</sup> are hard to understand, things<sup>19</sup> the ignorant and unstable twist<sup>20</sup> to their own destruction, as they also do to the rest of the scriptures.<sup>21</sup> 3:17 Therefore, dear friends, since you have been forewarned,<sup>22</sup> be on your guard that you do not get led astray by the error of these unprincipled men<sup>23</sup> and fall from your firm grasp on the truth.<sup>24</sup> 3:18 But grow in the grace and knowledge<sup>25</sup> of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the honor both now and on<sup>26</sup> that eternal day.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>15</sup> **sn** Critics generally assume that 2 Peter is not authentic, partially because in vv. 15-16 Paul is said to have written scripture. It is assumed that a recognition of Paul's writings as scripture could not have happened until early in the 2nd century. However, in the same breath that Paul is canonized, Peter also calls him "brother." This is unparalleled in the 2nd century apocryphal works, as well as early patristic writings, in which the apostles are universally elevated above the author and readers; here, Peter simply says "he's one of us."

<sup>16</sup> **sn** Paul wrote to you. That Paul had written to these people indicates that they are most likely Gentiles. Further, that Peter is now writing to them suggests that Paul had already died, for Peter was the apostle to the circumcised. Peter apparently decided to write his two letters to Paul's churches shortly after Paul's death, both to connect with them personally and theologically (Paul's gospel is Peter's gospel) and to warn them of the wolves in sheep's clothing that would come in to destroy the flock. Thus, part of Peter's purpose seems to be to anchor his readership on the written documents of the Christian community (both the Old Testament and Paul's letters) as a safeguard against heretics.

<sup>17</sup> **tn** Grk "as also in all his letters speaking in them of these things."

<sup>18</sup> **tn** Grk "in which are some things hard to understand."

<sup>19</sup> **tn** Grk "which." The antecedent is the "things hard to understand," not the entirety of Paul's letters. A significant principle is seen here: The primary proof texts used for faith and practice ought to be the clear passages that are undisputed in their meaning. Heresy today is still largely built on obscure texts.

<sup>20</sup> **tn** Or "distort," "wrench," "torture" (all are apt descriptions of what heretics do to scripture).

<sup>21</sup> **sn** This one incidental line, *the rest of the scriptures*, links Paul's writings with scripture. This is thus one of the earliest affirmations of any part of the NT as scripture. Peter's words were prophetic and were intended as a preemptive strike against the heretics to come.

<sup>22</sup> **tn** Grk "knowing beforehand."

<sup>23</sup> **tn** Or "lawless ones."

**sn** These unprincipled men. The same word is used in 2:7, suggesting further that the heretics in view in chapter 3 are the false teachers of chapter 2.

<sup>24</sup> **tn** Grk "fall from your firmness."

<sup>25</sup> **tn** The term "knowledge" (γνῶσις, *gnōsis*) used here is not the same as is found in 2 Pet 1:2, 3, 8; 2:20. This term is found in 1:5 and 1:6.

<sup>26</sup> **tn** Or "until."

<sup>27</sup> **tc** † The vast bulk of mss add ἀμήν (*amēn*, "amen") at the end of this letter, as they do almost all the rest of the NT books (only Acts, James, and 3 John lack a majority of witnesses supporting a concluding ἀμήν). The omission in B 1241 1243 1739\* 1881 2298 appears to be original, although the fact that some of the best and earliest Alexandrian witnesses (ⲓ<sup>72</sup> ⲛ A C P Ψ 33 co), along with the Byzantine text and early versions (vg sy), add the particle renders such a judgment less than iron-clad. NA<sup>27</sup> places the word in brackets, indicating doubts as to its authenticity.

**tn** Grk "day of eternity."

<sup>1</sup> **tn** Grk "in holy conduct and godliness."

<sup>2</sup> **tn** Or possibly, "striving for," but the meaning "hasten" for σπουδάζω (*spoudazō*) is normative in Jewish apocalyptic literature (in which the coming of the Messiah/the end is anticipated). Such a hastening is not an arm-twisting of the divine volition, but a response by believers that has been decreed by God.

<sup>3</sup> **sn** The coming of the day of God. Peter elsewhere describes the coming or *parousia* as the coming of Christ (cf. 2 Pet 1:16; 3:4). The almost casual exchange between "God" and "Christ" in this little book, and elsewhere in the NT, argues strongly for the deity of Christ (see esp. 1:1).

<sup>4</sup> **tn** Grk "on account of which" (a subordinate relative clause in Greek).

<sup>5</sup> **tn** Grk "being burned up, will dissolve."

<sup>6</sup> **tn** See note in v. 10 on "celestial bodies."

<sup>7</sup> **tn** Grk "being burned up" (see v. 10).

<sup>8</sup> **tn** Or possibly, "let us wait for." The form in Greek (προσδοκῶμεν, *prosdokōmen*) could be either indicative or subjunctive. The present participle in v. 14, however, is best taken causally ("since you are waiting for"), suggesting that the indicative is to be read here.

<sup>9</sup> **tn** The relative pronoun is plural, indicating that the sphere in which righteousness dwells is both the new heavens and the new earth.

<sup>10</sup> **tn** Grk "dwells." The verb κατοικέω (*katoikeō*) is an intensive cognate of οἰκέω (*oikeō*), often with the connotation of "taking up residence," "settling down," "being at home," etc. Cf., e.g., Matt 2:23; Acts 17:26; 22:12; Eph 3:17; Col 1:19; 2:9. Hence, the addition of the adverb "truly" is implicit in the connotation of the verb in a context such as this.

<sup>11</sup> **tn** Grk "dear friends, waiting for." See note in v. 13 on "waiting for."

<sup>12</sup> **sn** The Greek verb used in the phrase *strive to be found* is the same as is found in v. 10, translated "laid bare." In typical Petrine fashion, a conceptual link is made by the same linkage of terms. The point of these two verses thus becomes clear: When the heavens disappear and the earth and its inhabitants are stripped bare before the throne of God, they should strive to make sure that their lives are pure and that they have nothing to hide.

<sup>13</sup> **tn** "When you come into" is not in Greek. However, the dative pronoun αὐτῷ (*autō*) does not indicate agency ("by him"), but presence or sphere. The idea is "strive to found [before him/in his presence]."

<sup>14</sup> **tn** The language here is cryptic. It probably means "regard the patience of our Lord as an opportunity for salvation." In the least, Peter is urging his audience to take a different view of the delay of the *parousia* than that of the false teachers.