

God's Glory in God's Word

2 Peter: The Lord is Not Slow to Fulfill His Promise(s)

Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace. And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures. You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen. (2Pe 3:14-18)

Peter's 2nd letter is fairly straightforward, and the last 5 verses do a good job of summarizing the overall content. At the same time, Peter's words and references generate a fair amount of controversy, debate, and misunderstanding. The label Peter attributes to Paul's writings – some things in them are hard to understand – can apply to Peter himself if we fail to understand his words in light of the rest of Scripture.

For our lesson on 2 Peter, we will first consider the overall theme of the letter and then spend time considering the “controversies” that stem from his writing.

Part 1: Make Your Call and Election Sure

Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. (2Pe 1:10)

What are these qualities?

From 1:5-7, making effort to...

1. Supplement your faith with virtue
2. Supplement your virtue with knowledge
3. Supplement your knowledge with self-control
4. Supplement your self-control with steadfastness
5. Supplement your steadfastness with godliness
6. Supplement your godliness with brotherly affection
7. Supplement your brotherly affection with love

Why are these qualities important?

1. You will be exploited...

But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed. And in their greed they will exploit you with false words. Their condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep. (2Pe 2:1-3)

2. Judgment is coming

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be

exposed. Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. (2Pe 3:10-13)

Part 2: Putting Controversy in 2 Peter to Rest

Controversy #1: Losing Salvation

For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. (2Pe 1:8-9)

But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. (2Pe 2:1)

Response:

1. Peter has again pointed to the power of God bringing about the destruction of the sinful nature.

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. (2Pe 1:3-4)

In fact, “for this very reason”, we are called to “make the efforts described above. In this way, Peter’s message is identical to Paul’s when he instructs the Philippians:

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. (Php 2:12-13)

We work because God has worked and is working.

2. Recall our discussion from Hebrews. There are many who profess salvation that do not possess salvation. These are the ones told on the day of judgment by our Lord “depart from me, I **never** knew you.” These are the self-deceived of James 1:22.

Controversy #2: What is Peter talking about in 2 Peter 2:4?

For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment; (2Pe 2:4)

“But a more likely candidate for Peter’s reference emerges when we consider Jewish tradition. A number of writers in the intertestamental period developed a story about angels who sinned and were punished by God at the time of the Flood. The story finds its most developed form in the pseudepigraphical book 1 Enoch, but it is alluded to in several other writings as well. This tradition was not simply made up from whole cloth; the writers were elaborating on Genesis 6:1–4, a passage that

tells about “sons of God” who were attracted to the “daughters of men,” married them, and had children with them. In the Jewish tradition we are referring to, the “sons of God” were angels, and their cohabiting with women was a basic reason why God judged the world of Noah’s day.”

Moo, Douglas J.. 2 Peter, Jude (The NIV Application Commentary Book 18) . Zondervan Academic. Kindle Edition.

From 1 Enoch (not canon)

[Chapter 6]

¹ And it came to pass when the children of men had multiplied that in those days were born unto ² them beautiful and comely daughters. And the angels, the children of the heaven, saw and lusted after them, and said to one another: 'Come, let us choose us wives from among the children of men ³ and beget us children.' And Semjaza, who was their leader, said unto them: 'I fear ye will not ⁴ indeed agree to do this deed, and I alone shall have to pay the penalty of a great sin.' And they all answered him and said: 'Let us all swear an oath, and all bind ourselves by mutual imprecations ⁵ not to abandon this plan but to do this thing.' Then swore they all together and bound themselves ⁶ by mutual imprecations upon it. And they were in all two hundred; who descended in the days of Jared on the summit of Mount Hermon, and they called it Mount Hermon, because they had sworn ⁷ and bound themselves by mutual imprecations upon it. And these are the names of their leaders: Samlazaz, their leader, Araklba, Rameel, Kokabel, Tamlel, Ramlel, Danel, Ezeqeel, Baraqijal, ⁸ Asael, Armaros, Batarel, Ananel, Zaqiel, Samsapeel, Satarel, Turel, Jomjael, Sariel. These are their chiefs of tens.

[Chapter 8]

¹ And then Michael, Uriel, Raphael, and Gabriel looked down from heaven and saw much blood being ² shed upon the earth, and all lawlessness being wrought upon the earth. And they said one to another: 'The earth made without inhabitant cries the voice of their cryingst up to the gates of heaven. ³ And now to you, the holy ones of heaven, the souls of men make their suit, saying, "Bring our cause ⁴ before the Most High.'" And they said to the Lord of the ages: 'Lord of lords, God of gods, King of kings, and God of the ages, the throne of Thy glory (standeth) unto all the generations of the ⁵ ages, and Thy name holy and glorious and blessed unto all the ages! Thou hast made all things, and power over all things hast Thou: and all things are naked and open in Thy sight, and Thou seest all ⁶ things, and nothing can hide itself from Thee. Thou seest what **Azazel** hath done, who hath taught all unrighteousness on earth and revealed the eternal secrets which were (preserved) in heaven, which ⁷ men were striving to learn...

[Chapter 10]

¹ Then said the Most High, the Holy and Great One spake, and sent Uriel to the son of Lamech, ² and said to him: 'Go to Noah and tell him in my name "Hide thyself!" and reveal to him the end that is approaching: that the whole earth will be destroyed, and a deluge is about to come ³ upon the whole earth, and will destroy all that is on it. And now instruct him that he may escape ⁴ and his seed may be preserved for all the generations of the world.' And again the Lord said to Raphael: 'Bind Azazel hand and foot, and cast him into the darkness: and make an opening ⁵ in the desert, which is in Dudael, and cast him therein. And place upon him rough and jagged rocks, and cover him with darkness, and let him abide there for ever, and cover his face that he may ^{6,7} not see light. And on the day of the great judgement he shall be cast into the fire.

It should be noted that Jude also references 1 Enoch:

It was also about these that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his holy ones, to execute judgment on all and to convict all the ungodly of all their deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him." (Jud 1:14-15)

1 Enoch 1:9

And behold! He cometh with ten thousands of His holy ones to execute judgement upon all, and to destroy all the ungodly; and to convict all flesh of all the works of their ungodliness which they have ungodly committed, and all o the hard things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.

Next Week: 1 John