

The second epistle of Peter is like the three other “second” epistles in scripture (2Corinthians, 2Thessalonians and 2Timothy). We might add all three of John’s and Jude as well. These epistles are especially about declining conditions of the “last days.” Conditions that arise among God’s people rather than coming from without. There is a unique testimony especially given saints in this age to have, to hold, and to give witness to. Peter’s first epistle speaks to that. (Paul’s and James’ do too.) But early signs of departure had been detected by the apostles and prophets. So they are directed by the Holy Spirit to write to call back, and restore if possible, those that were going astray. They were also intended to slow the decline, while equipping the saints to stand faithful despite the departure already unfolding among them. And they speak of impending judgement. **If these messages were needed in those days how much more we need them today!** The last days began as the apostle’s work was done and they departed this life. Now nearly 2000 years later we seem to be nearing the **end of the last days** and shortly the Lord will return for His own. In these epistles, and especially 2Peter, sharp contrasts are drawn between the walk of believers and that of other religious people. Heed them.

Peter in this second letter writes as he is about to depart leaving, as it were, his last words to the flock he loves. (Both Peter and Paul write this way at the end of their ministry knowing that they will die before the rapture.) First he encourages continued spiritual growth and progress. He reminds us of our **calling and election** and urges that we make this sure to our hearts, for then we have a firm basis for godliness and faithfulness. He refers back to the Transfiguration and the prophets as witnesses to Christ and the glory (and judgement) to be revealed.

Then in chapter two he warns of **false prophets** which were arising. He issues scathing rebukes exposing them for what they are and calls down judgement upon them in a manner reminiscent of the Old Testament prophets. But he reminds us of God’s mercy and power to deliver the righteous from destruction that awaits the false prophets and their followers.

In chapter three he continues this theme and takes us back to the **Deluge** likening the conditions now to those in Noah’s time. **Judgement hangs over mankind today.** The only thing delaying it is the longsuffering of the Lord not being willing that any should perish. Peter then stretches our hearts forward to God’s final judgement of all, including the destruction of the universe as we now know it. Although this is yet more than a thousand years ahead of us (at least three thousand from when Peter wrote), **a thousand years is as but one day with the Lord.** But awaiting the faithful are New Heavens and a New Earth wherein **dwell** righteousness. What grace! Will you be there? God held back His wrath for thousands of years, so you and I could be born and live to enjoy earthly blessings he richly gives all men, though all are sinners. And He has made us to hear the gospel and receive eternal life and the hope of heaven. Knowing this moves us to devote ourselves to Christ and His interests. Grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

By Ron Canner, April 6, 2005.