

2 Peter

1:1 Simon Peter, a slave and apostle of Jesus the Messiah, to those who have received a belief that is as equally valuable as ours within the framework of the *dikaio sunay* of our God and the Savior, Jesus the Messiah.¹ **1:2** May grace and shalom be multiplied to you in the midst of understanding God and Jesus our Lord.²

1:3 May this happen just as His divine power has given us all things which lead to life and respect for God (πρὸς ζωὴν καὶ εὐσέβειαν) through an understanding of Him, who called us with reference to His own glory and excellence (ιδίᾳ δόξῃ καὶ ἀρετῇ),³ **1:4** in the light of which He has given us the precious and great promises, so that you have become sharers in His divine order of things through these, because you have escaped from the corruption within the earthly setup that operates by means of evil craving.⁴

1:5 And, indeed, regarding this same thing, while exerting all earnestness (σπουδὴν πᾶσαν), add excellence in the midst of your belief (ἐν τῇ πίστει ὑμῶν τὴν ἀρετῇ), and in the midst of excellence, add knowledge (τὴν γνῶσιν),⁵ **1:6** and in the midst of knowledge, add restraint (τὴν ἐγκράτειαν), and in the midst of restraint, add perseverance (τὴν ὑπομονήν), and in the midst of perseverance, add respect for God (τὴν εὐσέβειαν),⁶ **1:7** and in the midst of respect for God, add brotherly love (τὴν φιλαδελφίαν), and in the midst of brotherly love, add agape love (τὴν ἀγάπην).⁷

1:8 Now, if these things belong to you and are increasing, they cause you to be neither worthless nor unfruitful with respect to your understanding of our Lord Jesus the Messiah.⁸ **1:9** In contrast, as for the person where these things are not present, he is so near-sighted that he is blind, because he has lost sight of the cleansing of his former sins.⁹ **1:10** Therefore, brothers, make every effort to confirm God's calling and choosing you. And if you do these things, you will never experience disaster,¹⁰ **1:11** because, in this way, the entrance into the *aionic* kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Messiah, will be richly supplied to you.¹¹

1:12 Therefore, I will always be reminding you of these things, even though you know and have become established in the truth that is present among you.¹² **1:13** I consider it right as long as I am in this "tent" to wake you up by way of reminder,¹³ **1:14** knowing that the removal of my "tent" is imminent, just as indeed our Lord Jesus the Messiah made clear to me.¹⁴ **1:15** And I will make every effort indeed, so that, after my departure, you at any time have the ability to call these things to mind.¹⁵

1:16 It was not by following ingeniously concocted myths that we made known to you the power and presence of our Lord Jesus the Messiah, but it was because we were eyewitnesses of his grandeur.¹⁶ **1:17** For after he received honor and glory from God the Father, a voice of such a kind was produced for him by the Majestic Glory,

This is my beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased <Matthew 17:1-13; Mark 9:2-13; Luke 9:28-36>.¹⁷

1:18 And we heard this voice, which was produced out of heaven, while we were with him on the holy mountain.¹⁸ **1:19** Thus, we have with greater certainty the prophetic message to which you do well to pay attention as a lamp shining in a dark place until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts,¹⁹ **1:20** while knowing this first and foremost, that every prophetic comment contained in scripture is not a matter of the person's own explanation of

God.²⁰ **1:21** For no prophetic comment was ever produced by means of the will of man, but men, being moved by the Holy Spirit, spoke from God.²¹

2:1 Nevertheless, indeed, false prophets arose among the people, just as also there will be among you false teachers, who will introduce destructive ideas and will refuse to pay attention to the Owner who bought them. While they bring imminent destruction upon themselves,²² **2:2** indeed, many will follow their immoral actions that are characterized by an utter lack of self-restraint (αὐτῶν ταῖς ἀσελείαις). Because of them, the way of truth will be spoken of disrespectfully,²³ **2:3** and with greed they will sell you man-made statements. Condemnation for them is not lingering for a long time, and their destruction is not dozing.²⁴

2:4 For if God did not refrain from dealing with *angeloi* who behaved in an evil manner, but instead relegated them to Tartarus with chains of gloom and delivered them over to judgment where they are being kept,²⁵ **2:5** and if He did not refrain from dealing with the ancient world, but nevertheless preserved Noah, a proclaimer of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the disrespectful,²⁶ **2:6** and if He turned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes when He condemned them to destruction, having made them an example for future disrespectful people (μελλόντων ἄσεβέ[σ]ιν),²⁷ **2:7** while He rescued righteous Lot, who was being worn down by the lifestyle of lawless men in the midst of their utter lack of moral self-restraint (ἐν ἀσελείᾳ),²⁸ **2:8** (for, by what he saw and what he heard, this righteous man felt his righteous soul tormented by their lawless deeds, while he dwelt among them day after day),²⁹ **2:9** then the Lord knows how to rescue the respectful from testing/temptation, and how to keep for the day of judgment the unrighteous who will be punished,³⁰ **2:10** and especially those who proceed in their lives behind the leading of the flesh in the midst of their passion for uncleanness and who disregard authority. They are reckless, bold, self-willed people. They do not tremble when they speak disrespectfully of majestic things,³¹ **2:11** whereas *angeloi*, even though they are greater in strength and power, do not bring a defaming judgment against them before the Lord.³²

2:12 But these, like irrational animals who have been born in accordance with the natural order of things for the purpose of being captured and destroyed, because they speak disrespectfully in regard to things of which they have no good intellectual grasp, will indeed be destroyed because of their corruption.³³ **2:13** They will justifiably receive the wage that comes from wrongdoing. They consider it a daily luxury to satisfy their pleasures. They are stains and blemishes as they revel in their aesthetic deceptions while hanging out with you.³⁴ **2:14** They have eyes full of adultery and constantly restless for evil while they lure unestablished persons. They have a heart that has been trained in greed, and are children of the curse.³⁵ **2:15** They have wandered about aimlessly, because they have abandoned the straight path. They have followed the path of Balaam of Bosor who loved the reward of wrongdoing.³⁶ **2:16** Indeed, he received a rebuke for his own lawless act. A dumb donkey halted the insanity of the prophet when it spoke with the voice of a man.³⁷

2:17 These are waterless springs and dark clouds in the sky, driven by a huge storm, for whom the gloom of darkness has been preserved.³⁸ **2:18** Indeed, while talking about boastful things that serve no good purpose, they lure, in the midst of strong desires of the flesh, in the midst of actions that completely lack moral self-restraint (ἀσελγείαις), those who barely escape from them who conduct themselves in error.³⁹ **2:19** Even as they promise them freedom, they are slaves of destruction, because by that which a person is overcome, to this he has been enslaved.⁴⁰

2:20 Thus, if, after having escaped from the shameful deeds of the earthly setup by means of knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Messiah, they have become overcome by them, getting entangled in these things again, the last things have become worse for them than the first.⁴¹ **2:21** It would be better for them not to have known the way of *dikaioSunay* than, having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment which had been delivered to them.⁴²

2:22 The point of the true proverb has happened to them,

A dog returns to its own vomit <Proverbs 26:11>, and

A pig, after washing herself, returns to wallowing in the mud.⁴³

3:1 I am, in fact, writing to you, brothers, this second letter in which, i.e., in both of them, I am stimulating your uncontaminated intention by means of a reminder,⁴⁴ **3:2** so that you remember the words spoken previously by the prophets who were set apart and the instruction of your apostles of the Lord and Savior.⁴⁵

3:3 Know this first of all, that in the last days those who ridicule the message will come in their ridicule as they go their way in accordance with their own evil passions⁴⁶ **3:4** even saying, “Where is the promise of his appearance? For since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of the creation.”⁴⁷

3:5 In the midst of willfully choosing this, one thing that they are unwilling to recognize is that the heavens had existed from long ago and that the earth was established out of water and through the means of water within the story of God,⁴⁸ **3:6** because of which the earthly setup at that time was destroyed, when it was flooded with water.⁴⁹ **3:7** And, now, the heavens and earth have been reserved for fire with reference to the same story, as they are being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of men who do not respect God (τῶν ἀσεβῶν ἀνθρώπων).⁵⁰

3:8 And let not you be unwilling to recognize this one thing, beloved, that one day for the Lord is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day.⁵¹ **3:9** The Lord is not hesitating in regard to His promise as some consider hesitation, but He is being patient towards us. He does not desire any to be destroyed but for all to make the move to repentance.⁵² **3:10** Then, the Day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a loud, rushing noise, and the elements will be destroyed by being burned up. Indeed, the land and the works in it will not be found.⁵³

3:11 Because all these things are being destroyed in this way, what kind of people is it necessary for us to be in the midst of set apart lifestyles and actions that demonstrate respect for God

(εὐσεβείαις),⁵⁴ **3:12** as we wait for and hasten the appearance of the Day of God, on account of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning and the elements will melt by burning?⁵⁵ **3:13** Thus, according to His promise, we are waiting for a new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.⁵⁶ **3:14** Therefore, beloved, while you wait for these things, make every effort to be found by Him in a state of shalom, spotless and without blemish.⁵⁷

3:15 Indeed, regard the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom that was given to him,⁵⁸ **3:16** as that which also exists in all his letters, speaking in them concerning these things. Contained in the letters are some things hard to understand, which the unlearned and unstable distort, just as they do the rest of the writings to their own destruction.⁵⁹

3:17 You, therefore, beloved, because you know this ahead of time, be on your guard, so that you do not fall from your own firmness of commitment by being lead away by the error of unprincipled men.⁶⁰ **3:18** Instead, grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Messiah. To him be the glory, both now and into the day of the age. Amen.⁶¹

¹ Συμμεῶν Πέτρος δούλος καὶ ἀπόστολος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῖς ἰσότημον ἡμῖν λαχοῦσιν πίστιν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν καὶ σωτήρος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ – Two clues that indicate that Peter is writing to Jews. 1) Peter indicates in 1:16-21 that the apostles James, John, and he were the ones who told these Christians about the NT message, thus making it probable that they are Jews who visited Jerusalem for one of the OT festivals and then returned to their foreign city. We do not have any record of James' traveling to other locations, even though this does not mean that we can be absolutely certain that he did not. Many Christians had to leave Jerusalem as a result of the persecution that followed Stephen's death, but Luke tells us in Acts 8:1 that the apostles stayed in the city. Plus, James, the brother of John and who was on the Mt. of Transfiguration with Peter and John, was put to death by Herod in Acts 12 just before Paul leaves on the real first missionary journey by any apostle, making it even more improbable that James traveled outside the immediate area of Jerusalem. Peter could be referring to only John and himself as the ones who proclaimed the gospel to his readers originally, but it is difficult from the book of Acts to know when the two of them would have traveled together to preach the gospel in a foreign land. 2) Peter says in 3:15 that Paul had also written a letter to these people. This would certainly seem to point to the recipients of both this letter and Paul's as Gentiles since Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles. But if Paul is most likely the author of Hebrews, which is obviously written to Jewish believers who are being persecuted by Jewish non-believers, then it makes good sense to view the audience of Peter's letter as the same Jews to whom Paul wrote.

Certainly, because of Luke's mentioning Gentile converts to Judaism as those who are in the crowd in Jerusalem who are witnessing the foreign language phenomenon of Pentecost, it is plausible that Gentiles heard the gospel of Jesus for the first time from Peter, James, and John in Jerusalem during one of the three required Jewish festivals. And, then, it is possible that Paul wrote to them to encourage them, because of his being the apostle to the Gentiles, so that Peter has written them two letters (with this being the second – cf. 3:1), and Paul has written them one. This also means that 1 Peter is not the first letter to which Peter refers, and we have lost the first letter.

If, therefore, Peter's readers are Jews in whose community the rabbis, i.e., scribes and Pharisees, are giving the impression that, as leaders and educated students of the OT, they are more valuable to God than them these Christians, then Peter is stating something quite profound about the NT message—that all Christians obtain the same gift from God, eternal mercy through the Messiah Jesus (i.e., the king and high priest of the eternal realm) and citizenship in the Kingdom of God. Therefore, the belief of his readers comes with the same privilege as that of the apostles, the appropriate rabbis of God, the OT, and of the Messiah—eternal life. And all this is happening within God's project of bringing about eternal forgiveness and mercy for human beings that includes an inward condition of being primed and ready for eternity within the present realm.

Thus, Peter can say that these Christians have *received*, not produced, their belief. It is not something that they humanly brought about in and of themselves. Instead, *God* produced it within them by changing their inwardness and causing them to believe the truth of the apostolic message.

² χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη πληθυνθεῖ ἐν ἐπιγνώσει τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν – Peter's readers have heard the NT message of Jesus as the Messiah from James, John, and him and now understand the most important ideas that the transcendent God has desired to communicate to human beings. Therefore, Peter's own desire is that God's independent and initiating kindness, along with His promise of a shalom-like existence in eternity, continue to be extended toward his readers. Peter is saying that the key to a person's eternal destiny is their worldview to which they have committed themselves. If a person is committed to an authentic understanding of the transcendent Creator and His Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, then it makes sense for an apostle like Peter to desire that God continue to extend His undeserved kindness that leads to and eternal existence of morality and wholeness to those who have come to this understanding through having had the apostolic message presented to them.

³ Ὡς ἅπαντα ἡμῖν τῆς θείας δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ τὰ πρὸς ζωὴν καὶ εὐσέβειαν δεδωρημένης διὰ τῆς ἐπιγνώσεως τοῦ καλέσαντος ἡμᾶς ἰδίᾳ δόξῃ καὶ ἀρετῇ – Peter comments on one of the most remarkable occurrences within human history—that God exercised His power to call the twelve, and eventually thirteen (Paul as the apostle to the Gentiles), plain citizens of Israel to be the Messiah's authoritative spokesmen, i.e., his apostles.

The “all things which lead to life and respect for God through and understanding of Him” were the message that these men learned from the Messiah and which provided them with all that they needed intellectually to attain God's primary commodity for human beings, eternal life. This message included the wisdom to pursue a proper existence of obeying God within the present realm, because a person desires to show the utmost admiration for God, His role, and His authority over reality. If God says, “Jump,” we have the right to say only, “How high,” and then obey Him perfectly. God's plan was to point these apostles to His greatness and excellence as the one Creator God who is good, loving, gracious, and merciful. If ἀρετὴ refers to God's “excellence” per se, then we can think of it as all that makes God great in His character and personhood. Thus it includes at the very least His perfect rationality and His moral perfection that lead Him to act with sound judgment and undivided commitment to goodness as defined by His own character.

This also indicates that everything that God is doing with the gospel of Jesus is an expression of Himself as both glorious and excellent. By extrapolating, this story which God is telling is one of self-expression for and by God. He is revealing His goodness, His justice, His mercy, His rationality, and every other attribute of His through all that this

story contains, even the great evil that some people commit. They will receive either God's mercy or His justice, depending on whether they are vessels of mercy or vessels of wrath according to Paul's words in Romans 9.

⁴ δι' ὧν τὰ ῥίμα καὶ μέγιστα ἡμῖν ἐπαγγέλματα³ δεδώρηται, ἵνα διὰ τούτων γένησθε θείας κοινωνοὶ φύσεως ἀποφυγόντες τῆς ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἐν ἐπιθυμίᾳ φθοράς – Peter says that, in light of God's selecting and inwardly moving the apostles to understand and proclaim the greatness of God, the message that the apostles learned included a knowledge of the fulfillment of the Abrahamic promises of land, descendants, and eternal life to the Jews.

Peter goes on to say that the purpose that God had for the apostles' learning and proclaiming the ideas about the Messiah and the Abrahamic promises was so that his readers could participate in the God-made project of the eternal Kingdom of God and proceed towards it now. (Some translations use "nature" to translate φύσεως, which could easily be interpreted as God's own divine substance. However, the word in other NT uses refers to the way things are, i.e., how they are put together constituting a particular order or arrangement. Thus, Peter means the planned state of things that God intends for authentic believers to experience, which someday will be the Kingdom of God that will persist into eternity. There is, then, a transition from God's divine power/authority that worked among/in the apostles (τῆς θείας δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ – v. 3) to God's divine order or arrangement of reality that will be the eternal Kingdom of God (θείας κοινωνοὶ φύσεως – v. 4))

As a result, their being committed to heading towards eternal life involves their transitioning in the present realm from the manner in which Jews live within their humanly derived interpretation of the Mosaic Covenant, an interpretation that stems solely from their moral depravity that craves to rebel against God, which is simply *the* order of things or setup in this present realm, the κόσμος. In the light of God's having inwardly changed Peter's readers, they have transitioned to a life of properly pursuing obedience to God. Thus, Peter implies that his readers have categorically left behind their old way of life, legalistic rabbinic Judaism, and embraced a new way of life, Messianic Judaism, that is based upon God's grace and the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, who has now made his initial appearance.

⁵ Καὶ αὐτὸ τοῦτο δὲ σπουδῆν πᾶσαν παρεισενέγκαντες ἐπιχορηγήσατε ἐν τῇ πίστει ὑμῶν τὴν ἀρετὴν, ἐν δὲ τῇ ἀρετῇ τὴν γνώσιν – These next three verses detail the natural steps that Peter lists for his readers as authentic Christians to demonstrate they they have willfully and inwardly left behind their old mentality and lifestyle of legalistic Judaism, i.e., that they have "escaped from the corruption within the earthly system that operates by means of evil craving" (v. 4).

Peter states that those to whom he is writing should pursue these natural steps "in the midst of their belief." Thus, belief in the apostolic message is foundational to their acting and behaving in a manner that appropriately corresponds to this message. In addition, Peter expects them to be all in when it comes to what he is commanding them here. They should make every effort with an intense and committed conviction that the message that they are believing is true and that it is worth obeying for the sake of God's eternal mercy in the eternal Kingdom of God. Thus, their intense fervency to be authentic followers of Yahweh should include a concerted, real, human effort.

As a result, Peter exhorts his readers to add ἀρετὴ to their biblical intensity. In v. 3, Peter used this word to describe God along with His glory, δόξη. If ἀρετὴ is God's "excellence" *per se*, then we can think of it as referring to all that makes God great in His character, especially His perfect rationality and moral perfection that lead to His acting with sound judgment and undivided commitment to goodness as defined by His own being. Thus, Peter is asking his readers to make every effort to be great human beings, even in the midst of their continuing to be morally depraved, by thinking rationally and morally as much as possible in order to act with sound judgment and undivided commitment to biblical goodness.

In addition, they should add a stable and growing (cf. 1:8) knowledge of the biblical and apostolic message that they have heard from Peter, James, and John (cf. 1:18ff.), because it is only appropriate to learn as much as one can about the transcendent Creator of the reality in which they exist. Cf. 1 Peter for statements regarding these same concepts.

⁶ ἐν δὲ τῇ γνώσει τὴν ἐγκράτειαν, ἐν δὲ τῇ ἐγκρατείᾳ τὴν ὑπομονήν, ἐν δὲ τῇ ὑπομονῇ τὴν εὐσέβειαν – Next, Peter exhorts his readers to add moral restraint to their repertoire of biblical characteristics. Because they are still morally depraved, even in the midst of their being Christians and having authentic belief, they will find themselves wanting to disobey God, probably on a daily and sometimes on a moment by moment basis. In fact, they will actually disobey God, because they do not become morally perfect until they reach the eternal Kingdom of God. Nevertheless, they have embraced the message of Jesus as the Messiah that promises them mercy and morality in eternity. Therefore, Peter is encouraging them use as much self-control and restraint as they can personally muster to choose not to follow their desire to disobey God.

To this restraint from immorality, they should make every effort to persevere in their belief in the midst of all the pressures to abandon belief in God and follow the erroneous Jewish system of religion that is based upon an improper view of the Mosaic Covenant and that was current in their day, as Jesus himself discovered and spoke against.

Then, they should also add behavior that demonstrates the respect for God that He deserves, i.e., behavior that understands that God is the ultimate authority in all of reality and, therefore, should be obeyed. Thus, their behavior should reflect God's moral commandments and should reveal that these Jewish Christians are actually different from their fellow Jews who are also attempting to obey God's moral commandments, but with the wrong perspective because of their fundamental unbelief in and disregard for Jesus as the Messiah.

⁷ ἐν δὲ τῇ εὐσέβειᾳ τὴν φιλαδελφίαν, ἐν δὲ τῇ φιλαδελφίᾳ τὴν ἀγάπην – At the end of Peter's list of what should follow from having become an authentic believer is, first, brotherly love and care for each other within the community

of Christians and, second, a general love for other human beings which will be part of their continuing to carry out the apostles' responsibility of sharing the message of Jesus as the Messiah with the world (or an inward love for God; but it would seem better to think that the whole list flows out of a love for God, allowing for agape to refer to love for mankind in general).

cf. **Galatians 5:13** Brothers, you were called on the basis of freedom. Only do not use your freedom for an occasion of the flesh, but serve one another with love.⁷ **5:14** For the whole Torah has been summed up in one statement, You shall love your neighbor as yourself <Leviticus 19:18>.

cf. **Galatians 6:10** Therefore, while we have the opportunity, let us do good towards all men, and especially towards the members of the household of the faith.

⁸ ταῦτα γὰρ ὑμῖν ἑπάρχοντα καὶ πλεονάζοντα οὐκ ἀργούς οὐδὲ ἀκάρπους καθίστησιν εἰς τὴν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐπίγνωσιν – Peter indicates that the presence and even increase of the qualities and things that he exhorted his readers to provide themselves in the previous three verses (even if what he means by “increasing” is a firmer single-minded commitment to these qualities) would mean that they are technically living worthwhile lives that has all to do with their grasping and embracing a proper understanding of Jesus as the Messiah. This is to say that they are matching their lives with their intellectual understanding and persevering in their understanding. In the light of the next verses that speak of someone's abandoning his belief in Jesus as the Messiah, the increase of these qualities that Peter is talking about refers to a person's becoming more firmly committed inwardly to the truth of the NT message in the midst of demonstrating these qualities as much as possible.

⁹ ὃ γὰρ μὴ πάρεστιν ταῦτα, τυφλός ἐστιν μυωπάζων, λήθην λαβὼν τοῦ καθαρισμοῦ τῶν πάλαι αὐτοῦ ἁμαρτιῶν – Jewish readers clue – Peter uses the OT word “cleansing” (καθαρισμός). Rather than address the issue of the “world” so to speak that is made up of people who in general rebel against God in the midst of their ignorance of the biblical message, Peter goes on to talk about unbelievers who have heard this message and have even demonstrated some initial level of attraction to it. In the light of the possibility that Peter's readers are Jews to whom Paul wrote Hebrews, Peter is speaking about Jewish believers in that community who could not sustain their faith in the midst of the intense persecution that they were enduring and who could find strength in even Paul's letter. Thus, Peter says that the person who does not demonstrate the kind of qualities that he listed, even if he had apparently embraced the message of Jesus as the Messiah and claimed to understand it, is in fact an unbeliever. In other words, these qualities are indeed a necessary requirement for obtaining God's mercy, just as is a fundamental belief in Jesus as the Messiah after hearing about him. If belief is not accompanied by a fundamental desire to continue to belief and grow in one's understanding of God, along with a pursuit of basic morality, then the belief is not genuine and will not last.

Peter will go on in chapter 2 to discuss false teachers who have heard and supposedly believed the apostolic message. However, they have given up their belief and gone back to the erroneous ideas that they held prior to being exposed to the gospel. Indeed, this very human condition of believing truth and subsequently going back to lies is a major theme of this letter. Next, Peter will encourage his readers to make sure they do not do this.

¹⁰ διὸ μᾶλλον, ἀδελφοί, σπουδάσατε ἵνα βεβαίαν ὑμῶν τὴν κλησιν καὶ ἐκλογὴν ποιῆσθε ταῦτα γὰρ ποιοῦντες οὐ μὴ πταίσητέ ποτε – Peter is saying that once a person comes to a knowledge of Jesus as the Messiah through whom he obtains God's mercy at the judgment, he should always pursue confirming that he is a genuine believer and has been chosen and selected by God for eternal salvation. This is the most valuable self-knowledge that a human being can possess. And if a person confirms this through pursuing growth in the qualities that Peter has listed, then he will never experience the awful consequences of God's eternal condemnation that occur for those who abandon their belief in Jesus. Consequently, there is great value in accurate self-knowledge in regard to one's biblical belief.

¹¹ οὕτως γὰρ πλουσίως ἐπιχορηγηθήσεται ὑμῖν ἡ εἰσόδος ἵνα εἰς τὴν αἰώνιον βασιλείαν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν καὶ σωτήρος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ – Peter is saying that the above is how a person survives God's judgment and is given a clear and completely unobstructed “path” that he “walks” from the judgment into the eternal Kingdom of God. If Peter is writing to Jews, then it makes that much more sense that the aionic kingdom (τὴν αἰώνιον βασιλείαν) begins with the Millennial Kingdom of Israel's greatness as God promised in Genesis 12 and then continues with the new earth (cf. Revelation 20,21).

Cf. Isaiah 26:19, “Your dead will live; their corpses will rise. You who lie in the dust, awake and shout for joy, for your dew is as the dew of the dawn, and the earth will give birth to the departed spirits (לְיָמֵי מְנוּחָה יִרְנְנִים) (ἡ δὲ γῆ τῶν ἀσεβῶν πεσεῖται).” However, compare the LXX translation of Isaiah 26:14 & 19 with respect to מְנוּחָה—ιατροὶ=healers, doctors in v. 14 and τῶν ἀσεβῶν=ungodly in v. 19. Nevertheless, it makes more sense in the context of Isaiah that certainly the first be translated ἀσεβεῖς, so that it refers to ungodly people who have oppressed the Jews, the people of God. Then, in v. 19, consistent with the other lines in the verse, it refers merely to Israelites who have died but were people of authentic belief, so that, now, they will realize eternal life.

¹² Διὸ μελλήσω ἀεὶ ὑμᾶς ὑπομιμνήσκω περὶ τούτων καίπερ εἰδόμενος καὶ ἐστηριγμένους ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ ἀληθείᾳ – Because the outcome of such a pursuit, which is eternal life, is so important and valuable to Peter's readers, he feels it necessary to say these things over and over, even though they already know them—even from Paul! Who knows. It may be just this time that a person, humanly speaking, responds to Peter's exhortations, when he may have abandoned his belief in Jesus in the midst of the hardships of life and the temptation to avoid persecution.

Peter calls the apostolic message the truth is among them, which is to say it comprises the true ideas that Peter and

others have presented to them and circulates among them as authentic believers. This is in contrast to the false ideas that also circulate among them and against which Peter is writing.

¹³ δίκαιον δὲ ἠγοῦμαι, ἐφ' ὅσον εἰμι ἐν τούτῳ τῷ σκηνώματι, διεγείρειν ὑμᾶς ἐν ἴψοις – Peter refers to a common syndrome among human beings, even after they become inwardly changed by God and authentic believers in the truth. They easily become dull in the understanding of the truth, as if they have gone to sleep and are no longer able to think about reality in a well-mannered way. Peter feels a moral rightness to wake his readers up and to repeat what they already know over and over as part of what they need to persevere in their belief to the end of their lives.

¹⁴ εἰδὼς ὅτι ταχινή ἐστιν ἡ ἀπόθεσις τοῦ σκηνώματός μου ἡ καὶ ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ἐδήλωσέν μοι – Peter's sense of the rightness of his repeating his exhortations to his readers is enhanced by the fact that he believes that he does not have long to live, with the idea, obviously, that his death will end any opportunity to speak to them again with a personal letter or in person. Or, perhaps, he is thinking that the letter will outlast him and, therefore, be the way that he can repeat these things after he no longer can personally. Jesus had somehow informed Peter that his life would not be a long one or would end violently like his own (cf. John 21:17-19).

¹⁵ σπουδάσω δὲ ἵνα ἐκάστοτε ἔχῃτε ὑμᾶς μετὰ τὴν ἐμὴν ἔξοδον τὴν τούτων ἑπισημειῶν ποιῆσθαι – Peter is thinking either of the mere effort of writing this letter as the means for their being able to recall these ideas from the document after his death. Or he is thinking of putting the kind of effort into this letter that makes these ideas as clear and understandable as possible to his readers so that they can recall them later, even if they do not have access to the actual letter itself.

¹⁶ Οὐ γὰρ σεσοφισμένοις μύθοις ἐξακολουθήσαντες ἐγνωρίσαμεν ὑμῖν τὴν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δύναμιν καὶ παρουσίαν ἀλλ' ἐπόπται γεννηθέντες τῆς ἐκείνου μεγαλειότητος – Here, the “we” must refer to the Peter, James, and John as members of the original apostles and not to, for example, Paul or even any of the other apostles. Therefore, these are Christians to whom Paul has written (2 Peter 3:15) but who did not hear the message of Jesus the Messiah originally from him. They heard it from Peter and/or James and/or John and, most likely, therefore, in Jerusalem, because of the strong possibility that these men never left Jerusalem on the basis of no mention in Acts or other NT documents of their having done so. In addition, Peter's readers must be from a city outside of Jerusalem and relatively far away, because he is writing them a letter. Therefore, they must have visited Jerusalem, probably during one of the three OT festivals, and maybe even asked to see the head apostles because they had heard about and become intrigued with the news of Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah. Then, they had become believers, returned to their Jewish community in some other city, perhaps even outside of Israel proper, and now were being encouraged by Peter in their faith through this letter. Consequently, could this group be the Jewish Christian community to whom Paul wrote Hebrews? If so, then Peter has written to them before, too, but not with 1 Peter (cf. 2 Peter 3:1 and my notes on 1 Peter).

In this verse, Peter is claiming to have been an eyewitness of Jesus' life as the Messiah, i.e., his “power and presence” whereby he performed miracles as brought about by God and claimed to be the long expected King and Priest of the Jews. And his life included the incident on the mountain when Moses and Elijah appeared to a transformed Jesus with gleaming white clothes (his “grandeur”) along with the voice out of heaven from the transcendent Father that stated clearly Jesus' identity and role as the Son of God (cf. Matthew 17:1-13). Only James and John were with Jesus and Peter at this time.

Two broad possibilities – 1) Someone is accusing the apostles of making up the story and message of Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah, e.g., the leaders of current rabbinic Judaism who may be claiming that the apostles have embellished the stories of Jesus to make him out to be the God-ordained and resurrected Messiah (whereas, in stark contrast to this, Peter, James, and John experienced firsthand God's miraculous actions toward Jesus to verify his Messiahship), or 2) Peter is accusing all those who present explanations of reality that do not include Jesus as the Messiah of concocting myths (=explanations of reality that are not based upon an accurate understanding of the OT and reality). Narrowing this last possibility, Peter is talking about either a) Gentile pagans who have made up all the myths of their polytheism that explain their gods, or b) Jewish rabbis who have made up the Oral Law that they teach within Judaism. If Peter is writing to Jewish Christians, then either 1) or 2b). It seems more likely that 1) is the case, that the false teachers, like the Jews against whom Paul writes Hebrews, are denying that Jesus is the Messiah while continuing to worship with the Jewish believers, because this is what they all have always done in the Jewish community in which they live. However, in this case, the false teachers are encouraging the Jewish believers to abandon their belief in Jesus as the Messiah and return to be simply Mosaic Covenant following Jews.

¹⁷ λαβὼν γὰρ παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ πατρὸς τιμὴν καὶ δόξαν φωνῆς ἐνεχθείσης αὐτῷ τοιαύδε ὑπὸ τῆς μεγαλοπρεπούς δόξης ὁ υἱὸς μου ὁ ἀγαπητὸς μου οὗτός ἐστιν ἕως ἄν ἐγὼ εὐδόκησα – cf. [Matthew 17:2](#) And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light.

Peter's “proof” of the veracity of his information about Jesus is the miraculous transformation of Jesus into a visible state of glory while talking to Moses and Elijah and then God's voice from His transcendent position of Jesus' identity and role. These two sequential acts of God of an unusual and glorious nature of which Peter was an eyewitness with James and John allows him to comment in the following verses on the role of a prophet of God. It must involve God's communicating to the prophet exactly what He wants him to say on His behalf. Therefore, Peter, James, and John had not only Jesus' instructing them as the Messiah, but also the transcendent God's instructing them through Jesus' transfiguration and His own audible voice within the creation. By virtue of the two manners in which these three men

had received truth from God, i.e., through His Messiah and through His miraculous change of Jesus accompanied by His own voice, they took on the role of true prophets to the people.

It would have been interesting to see what the reaction would have been if Jesus' transfiguration and God's voice had taken place in the sight of a large Jewish crowd that included the Pharisees and Sadducees. The theological fact is that without God's changing any of their hearts, they would still have rejected Jesus and executed him as a charlatan, because certainly his thousands (?) of miracles displayed a similar glory which they should have recognized as God's credentialing him as the Messiah.

It is also interesting that Peter cites this event instead of Jesus' resurrection and appearance to his disciples. I wonder if it has something to do with the Jews' expectations of the visible glory of the Messiah who restores the Davidic Kingdom and destroys their enemies. Cf. **Zechariah 14:1** Behold, a day is coming for the LORD when the spoil taken from you will be divided among you. **2** For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city will be captured, the houses plundered, the women ravished and half of the city exiled, but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city. **3** Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle. **4** In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south. **5** You will flee by the valley of My mountains, for the valley of the mountains will reach to Azel; yes, you will flee just as you fled before the ^aearthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD, my God, will come, and all the holy ones with Him!

¹⁸ καὶ ταύτην τὴν φωνὴν ἡμεῖς ἠκούσαμεν ἔξ οὐρανοῦ ἐνεχθεισαν σὺν αὐτῷ ὄντες ἐν τῷ 'ἀγίῳ ὄρει' – Even though the gospel accounts indicate that there were several occasions when God spoke like this into the created reality about Jesus, Peter refers to just one time specifically, that on the so-called Mt. of Transfiguration (cf. Matthew 17:1-13). Could he be referring to this particular time because of its similarity to Moses who heard the voice of God on Mt. Sinai, from which the rabbinic leaders are claiming that they are deriving their authoritative understanding of God and reality? Thus, Peter would be saying to them that James, John, and he had their own Moses-like experience with the transcendent Creator that went on to include their being taught the biblical message by the Messiah himself. In any event, the “we” can refer to just the three apostles who were there—Peter, James and John, the latter two being brothers.

The point that Peter is making that, in spite of what the false teachers are saying, he has divine proof that Jesus is the Messiah, which means that his readers have a divine and moral obligation to listen to and believe what he has to say about Jesus. Cf. v. 19.

¹⁹ καὶ ἔχομεν βεβαίωτον τὸν προφητικὸν λόγον, ᾧ καλῶς ποιεῖτε προσέχοντες ὡς λύχνῳ φαίνοντι ἐν ἀσχηρῷ τόπῳ, ἕως οὗ ἡμέρα διασφύσῃ καὶ ἠέλιος ἀνατείλῃ ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν – On the basis of his eyewitness experience with both Jesus as the Son of God and the transcendent Creator, Peter can claim that James, John, and he have just that much more certainty of the truth of what they proclaim, which he calls the “prophetic message” (τὸν προφητικὸν λόγον), i.e., the information about Jesus as the Messiah that originally came from the transcendent Creator and was conveyed by not only Jesus' own words, but also the events of his life. Peter and the other apostles learned of the Messiah through the “prophetic message” so to speak that was the life and words of the Messiah himself. Peter, James, and John became even more confident in the veracity of this message and its messianic ideas when, on the Mt. of Transfiguration, they saw Jesus change into a brightly shining icon of God and they heard Yahweh explicitly declare in their human language from His transcendent position that Jesus is the Davidic king. We know from the gospel accounts that this statement by God occurred on two other occasions also (cf. Matt. 3:17; 12:18; 17:5; Mark 1:11; 9:7; 12:6; Luke 3:22; 20:13. Also cf. John 12:28).

In addition, because of the eternal impact of this message, Peter says that his readers should give great enduring attention to it throughout the rest of their lives, implying that doing so will result in a great benefit for them. The presence of this information is like a lamp that shines in the moral and spiritual darkness that exists on earth apart from it, just as Paul says in Ephesians 5:16, “The days are evil” (cf. John 1:5 – Indeed, the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not win out over it). Thus, if someone wants to live life well and not “stumble” over unseen rocks of error, he should embrace the “light” of the message of Jesus as the Messiah. The result will be that the “day will dawn and the morning star will rise in a person's heart,” meaning that the person will experience the transition from the present dark realm of moral depravity through the final judgment to the bright morning light of the eternal Kingdom of God where Jesus will reign as king.

There are other passages that use the phrase “morning star,” such as Revelation 2:28, where Jesus says that he will give “the morning star” (τὸν ἀστέρα τὸν πρωϊνόν) to the person who endures in his belief. Then, in Revelation 22:16, Jesus calls himself “the bright morning star” (ὁ ἀστήρ ὁ λαμπρὸς ὁ πρωϊνός). There is also Isaiah 14:12, where the evil king of Babylon is called “the star of the morning, son of the dawn” (כִּי־לִבְיָדָיִךְ לְבַיָּתֶךָ) (ὁ ἑσπέρου ὁ πρωῖ ἀνατέλλων).

Consequently, this label was an idiomatic expression in the agricultural societies of the ANE that referred to the optimistic hope that people could have when nighttime ended and morning dawned that they were alive and well for surviving another day whereby they could do the work that was necessary in order to provide food, shelter, clothing, and protection from their enemies for themselves. Even the king of Babylon had referred to himself this way as the supposedly wise and powerful ruler of his people, thus elevating himself above Yahweh in his own mind and in the mind of the subjects of his empire. In a similar vein, Peter calls eternal life the “morning star” for his readers, because it

will be when they transition from this dark and immoral realm into it that they will experience the same kind of optimistic hope and enjoyment that the ANE people experienced when every day dawned a new day.

²⁰ τοῦτο πρῶτον γινώσκοντες ὅτι πᾶσα ἑπιλύσεως οὐ γίνεται – Jewish readers clue – Peter uses the word “writing/scripture” (γραφῆ) to refer to the OT. Option #1 – Peter affirms that a proper explanation of the OT prophets’ message cannot come merely from whatever human beings might want to imagine that it is. Option #2 – Peter affirms that a proper explanation of God by the OT prophets did not ultimately come from them, but from God.

In the case of James, John, and him, Peter is following up on what he said in vs. 16 & 17 to the effect that it was God who “told” him (and James and John) that Jesus is the Messiah through Jesus’ life and words, including the experience that they had when God explicitly spoke from His transcendent position into the story of the created reality. Therefore, option #2 above makes more sense, so that Peter is also saying that the false teachers’ authority to speak on behalf of God is nothing in comparison to James’, John’s, and his. The false teachers have not heard from God. James, John, and Peter have. By this they are “certain” that what they say about Jesus is true. Can the false teachers cite a similar experience with God? Obviously not.

Similarly, should people just start talking about God as though they know what they are talking about, as though God has given them the “prophetic message” so to speak, even if they have “studied” the Bible and been “trained” by supposedly reputable instructors, e.g., seminary professors, or, perhaps, are members of this esteemed class of Christians, i.e., seminary professors and ordained pastors? No. All they can do is point to the apostles and other biblical authors while getting out of the way of individuals’ doing their own work.

²¹ οὐ γὰρ θελήματι ἀνθρώπου ἠνέχθη τῆς προφητείας ποτέ, ἀλλὰ ὑπὸ πνεύματος ἁγίου φερόμενοι ἐλάλησαν ἄπὸ θεοῦ ἄνθρωποι – Peter is stating categorically and unambiguously that the explanations of God in the OT are not from the imaginations of man but from the mouth of God. Thus, they are true. In the same way, Peter is claiming apostolic authority for James, John, and himself as those who initially and now in letter have presented the “prophetic message” of the NT ideas of Jesus as the Messiah to these readers. Just as the OT prophets’ ideas about Yahweh were true, Peter’s ideas about Jesus as the Messiah are true.

cf. Jeremiah 23:21,22 – I did not send the prophets, but they ran. I did not speak to them, but they spoke. But if they had stood in My council, then they would have made My people hear My words, and they would have turned them back from their evil way and from the evil of their actions.

²² Ἐγένοντο δὲ καὶ ψευδοπροφῆται ἐν τῷ λαῷ, ὡς καὶ ἐν ὑμῖν ἔσονται ψευδοδιδάσκαλοι, οἵτινες παρεισάξουσιν αἰρέσεις ἀπωλείας καὶ τὸν ἀγοράσαντα αὐτοὺς δεσπότην ἀρνούμενοι. ἐπάγοντες ἑαυτοῖς ταχινήν ἀπόλειαν – Having used in the previous verses the example of prophets as spokesmen of God in the OT, Peter now refers to the fact that there were people who claimed to be spokesmen for God in the OT, but who disseminated lies for the sake of their own egos and not for God. While it should be obvious that a person cannot speak on behalf of God without God’s making it clear that He is granting this responsibility and privilege to him, certain people in OT times arrogantly did try to pawn themselves off as authoritative, divine spokesmen when they had no business doing so.

For example, Jeremiah 23:16, “Thus says Yahweh of hosts, ‘Do not listen to the words of the prophets who are prophesying to you. They are leading you into futility. They speak a vision of their own imagination, not from the mouth of Yahweh.’”

In the same way, so-called Christians will claim that they can teach the biblical message and will seek to lure people to follow them, when these teachers are, in fact, abandoning the apostolic message. Peter will go on to explain that the thrust of their message will appeal to people’s emotions and earthly desires, while ignoring the key element of the cross that the Messiah has died to qualify to be their advocate at the final judgment and to obtain for them mercy and eternal life. They may even mention Jesus and the cross, but their misunderstanding of the significance of his death will, in effect, be a refusal to pay attention to him.

Another clue that Peter is writing to Jewish readers is that he speaks of false prophets among the people (ψευδοπροφῆται ἐν τῷ λαῷ), so that he feels that he does not have to name these people specifically as the “Jews” or “Israelites.”

These false prophets were men who claimed that they were explaining God correctly, as though they were speaking authoritatively and justifiably on His behalf, when they had no clear, biblical nor divine evidence to do so. Therefore, because they were not “moved by the Holy Spirit” (v. 21 – ὑπὸ πνεύματος ἁγίου φερόμενοι), they were merely *false* prophets.

Cf. Jeremiah 26, especially vs. 7 & 8, “The priests and the prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah speaking these words in the house of Yahweh. When Jeremiah finished speaking all that Yahweh had commanded him to speak to all the people, the priests and the prophets and all the people seized him, saying, ‘You must die! Why have you prophesied in the name of Yahweh saying, “This house will be like Shiloh and this city will be desolate, without inhabitant?”’ And all the people gathered about Jeremiah in the house of Yahweh.”

It is key to note that the false prophets of Jeremiah’s day spoke enthusiastically about Yahweh and put great effort into worshipping Him in Jerusalem in the temple. In line with this, all the rest of the Israelites in the southern Kingdom of Judah were outwardly worshipping God and speaking of Him. However, they were in fact engaging in great evil by the prophets’ not correctly understanding God and orally representing Him properly to the people, so that they decided to follow these erroneous spokesmen, rather than thinking clearly about what they were saying. In this way, they, like the

false teachers who will be among the Christians to whom Peter is writing, “refused to pay attention to the Owner who bought them,” i.e., to Yahweh.

Thus, Peter claims that, just as there were false prophets among the Jews in OT times who gave the impression that they were speaking on behalf of Yahweh and yet were not, his readers will see the same phenomenon among them. The false prophets of old spoke enthusiastically about God while claiming that the people’s adherence to the Mosaic Covenant and the traditions that had been derived from it was pleasing to God and constituted proper obedience to Him. Likewise, Peter’s readers will find that people will say the same thing among them, to the effect that they portray themselves as being equally apostolic as Peter, James, and John, while professing to follow Yahweh and believe in Jesus as the Messiah.

In addition, based upon other statements in this letter, these false teachers have been exposed to the message of Jesus as the Messiah and have even appeared to embrace it authentically. However, by virtue of their current perspective that is based upon human and not divine ideas, they have now rejected this message and gone back to focusing on the Mosaic Covenant—even while continuing to participate in the Christian community and to proclaim Jesus as the Messiah. These are Judaizers who are Judaizing Jewish believers and not Gentile believers as in Galatians. Also, in this way, they are “refusing to pay attention to the Owner [God, Yahweh] who bought them [with the death of the Messiah].” Just as the ramifications for the OT false prophets were condemnation from God, there will be the eternal kind of condemnation for these false teachers who are operating within the Christian community. These false teachers must also be the same people in whom the characteristics of 1:5-7 do not actually exist, no matter how much they may try to give the appearance of such (cf. 1:9). They are harsh and oppressive, not loving like the apostles. Therefore, they demonstrate their inwardness that destines them for eternal condemnation and not salvation (cf. Galatians 1:8,9 – 1:8). However, even if we or the *angelos* from heaven were to proclaim to you a message of good news that is the opposite of that which we did proclaim to you, let him be eternally condemned. 1:9 As we have said before and now I am saying again, if someone proclaims to you a message that is contrary to what you embraced, let him be condemned).

²³ καὶ πολλοὶ ἐξακολουθήσουσιν αὐτῶν ταῖς ἀσελείαις δι’ οὓς ἡ ῥόδὸς τῆς ἀληθείας βλασφημηθήσεται – Peter labels the intentions and pursuits of the false teachers who subscribe to an erroneous perspective on the Mosaic Covenant as characterized by ἀσελία. Jude 4 uses the word, “For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness (ἀσελία) and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ [NAS95].” Thus, the word refers to thinking that one has the moral license to do whatever he wants. These people pursue evil with total abandon. These teachers obviously will regard the true message of Jesus the Messiah as erroneous, thus distorting the ideas in the Bible, while also claiming to be Christians and to be definitely and completely committed to the Mosaic Covenant. Consequently, the evil that they pursue with total abandon is *religious adherence to the Mosaic Covenant* that may include the same kind of worldly immorality (financial cheating, sexual immorality, etc.) of which the OT prophets accused the Israelites (cf. Jeremiah 23:9ff.), but it does not have to. It could be just a commitment to a religious lifestyle that lacks a proper understanding of God, because these people grab certain ideas from the Bible, using them to promote a kind of Christianity that suits their emotional needs, while then ignoring other ideas in the Bible that would fill out their understanding, but are simply unattractive to them. Thus, their ἀσελία is a complete lack of self-restraint when it comes to authentic morality.

However, the real immorality for these Jewish false teachers would be their thinking that they are good enough to make themselves worthy of God’s blessings and even mercy, which is a contradiction in terms. Modern Christians do the same thing by talking about God’s “honoring” their actions that will result in His blessing them. Earned mercy is an oxymoron, biblically and properly speaking, because even the condition for obtaining God’s mercy, changed inwardness and repentance, must be graced and granted by God in order for mercy itself to be graced. Thus, grace through and through is the only ultimate and efficient cause not only of the human condition required to obtain God’s mercy, but also of the divine dispensing of mercy.

In addition, because these false teachers are promoting a false way of understanding Yahweh and the Messiah, they will speak derisively and disrespectfully of the true way of understanding God, because it will not fit with their man-made agenda and intentions for how to teach and follow the Bible. Therefore, in the midst of teaching the Bible, they will actually be rejecting the Bible!! They will refuse to accept certain key ideas of the Bible and will use only those ideas that suit their selfish purposes for creating out of the Bible a religion called “Christianity.” The result will be that those who follow them will commit the same error of speaking disrespectfully of the actual truth of the Bible, even while claiming to teach the Bible.

²⁴ καὶ ἐν πλεονεξίᾳ πλαστοῖς λόγοις ὑμᾶς ἐμπορεύονται, οἷς τὸ κρίμα ἔκπαλαι οὐκ ἄργεῖ καὶ ἡ ἀπώλεια αὐτῶν οὐ ῥυστάζει – Peter indicates that greed is what motivates these false teachers. This may not be greed for money, but it could be greed for applause and approval by man, including greed for power that allows these teachers to manipulate people into approving of them. Πλεον, like πλεον, is the comparative of πολὺς, which means much. Εξία comes from ἔχων. Thus, the word means having more than much, i.e., a desire for more than much, or more than what one either deserves or currently has. The false teachers “sell” their erroneous perspective on the Mosaic Covenant to the Jewish believers, hoping to garner their support and to collect them as followers. They want much more than the applause and support that is actually proper for human spokesmen on behalf of God, who should get all the applause and support. Peter also says that their ideas and statements (λόγοις) about God are man-made. The word he uses is πλαστοῖς, from

which we get our word plastic. The statements that these false teachers make about God come from ideas that they shape and mold apart from the true message of the Bible. Thus, their statements serve their own self-interests, as was the case for the false prophets in OT times, but not those of God. For example, Jeremiah 23:16, “Thus says Yahweh of hosts, ‘Do not listen to the words of the prophets who are prophesying to you. They are leading you into futility. They speak a vision of their own imagination, not from the mouth of Yahweh.’”

Consequently, God’s justice and destruction are simply waiting patiently for these Jewish rebels of God and of the Jewish Messiah.

²⁵ Εἰ γὰρ ὁ θεὸς ἀγγέλων ἀμαρτησάντων οὐκ ἐφείσατο ἀλλὰ ῥσειραῖς ζόφου ταρταρώσας παρέδωκεν εἰς κρίσιν ῥτηρουμένους – Anchor Bible Dictionary, [Dead, Abode of the] “In 2 Pet 2:4 mention is made of casting rebel angels into Tartarus. In classical Greek mythology murky Tartarus was said to be as far below Hades as earth is below the heavens, so much so that an anvil could fall for nine days and nights until it reached it. Tartarus is described as a prison with gates, and it too is personified (Homer Iliad 8.13–16; Hesiod Theog. 713–35).”

Who are these *angeli*? Assuming that Peter is presenting these examples in chronological order, these would have to be beings who existed prior to Noah and who demonstrated rebellion against God. Are they the Nephilim and “sons of God” (בְּנֵי־לִלְיִתַּיִם) (οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ) of Genesis 6:1,2,4? Probably not, because it makes the most sense that the “sons of God” were great men and rulers who were seen as their chief god’s proxy, not angels *per se*, because they had children by women of their day. The point of Genesis 6:1,2,4 is that these powerful men saw women as objects to be taken, as many as they could acquire as wives (בָּנוּ) (γυναῖκας), and used for their own selfish ends. In this way, the “daughters of men” were “good” (טָבָה) (καλαί), so that they took “whomever they chose” (אֵת־כֹּל־אֲשֶׁר־בָּחַרְתָּם) (ἀπὸ πασῶν ὧν ἐξελέξαντο).

Perhaps, the *angeli* were self-proclaimed messengers of God who attempted to explain the nature of reality on the basis of their own rebellious minds and hearts, because they were not “moved by the Holy Spirit” (v. 21 – ὑπὸ πνεύματος ἁγίου φερόμενοι), i.e., OT “prophets,” who lived prior to Noah. However, Peter seems to list all the unbelievers of Noah’s time in v. 5, thus making the latter different from the *angeli* of v. 4, unless he goes back in time with the second example.

Or, and most likely, the *angeli* were simply invisible, angelic beings who were rebels against God as Satan, the Adversary, has been. However, because they do not die, they simply were relegated to a location within the created reality where they are being kept for their own final judgment that will result in eternal destruction. The definite inference from this passage in 2 Peter is that these *angeli* still exist in a prison-like location until the final “judgment” takes place. Is this the same “final” judgment that human beings will experience, or is it simply a judgment-like experience where the *angeli* will eventually suffer destruction as rebellious human beings will also? It probably does not matter.

The point is that God did not overlook the evil behavior of these rebellious beings, and His intent is to condemn and destroy them eventually.

²⁶ καὶ ἀρχαίου κόσμου οὐκ ἐφείσατο ἀλλὰ ὄγδοον Νῶε δικαιοσύνης κήρυκα ἐφύλαξεν κατακλυσμὸν ῥκόσμῳ ἀσεβῶν ἐπάξας – In chronological order, Peter refers to another incident in the past in OT history where God dealt with rebellious people while also rescuing those who were inwardly changed and authentic believers in God. In this case, God saved Noah and his family from the flood that destroyed the rest of mankind who were evil and refused to obey God by repenting and pursuing morality (Genesis 6-9).

²⁷ καὶ πόλεις Σοδόμων καὶ Γομόρρας τεφρώσας [καταστροφῆ] κατέκρινεν ὑπόδειγμα μελλόντων ῥάσεβ[σ]ιν θετικῶς – Again in chronological order, Peter refers to a third event in OT history whereby a minority of folks escaped the destruction that God brought on those who had rejected Him as their God. In this case, it was Lot, Abraham’s nephew, along with the rest of his family, who were spared physical death when God rained fire and brimstone down on the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah along the Dead Sea (cf. Genesis 19).

Peter says that God was using His treatment of the evil people of Sodom and Gomorrah as proof of His justice that will extend to anyone else future to these people, if they continue in their rebellion against God like those in these two cities. Nevertheless, God will also rescue from His condemnation those who have authentic belief in Him. These two responses to people, condemnation and salvation, are His pattern.

cf. Jeremiah 23:14 - ...All of them have become to Me like Sodom and her inhabitants like Gomorrah.

Therefore, indeed, these OT stories are clear and sufficient evidence of God’s justice and should serve as adequate examples (ὑπόδειγμα) for all future generations of Jews and Gentiles to warn them away from false ideas and disobeying God.

²⁸ καὶ δίκαιον Λὼτ καταπονούμενον ὑπὸ τῶν ἀθέσμων ἐν ἀσελγείᾳ ἀναστροφῆς ἐρρύσατο – See comments above regarding ἀσελγεία in 2:2. Lot felt the effect of being surrounded by people who had no compunction about behaving in an openly immoral manner in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Indeed, he felt beat down, oppressed, and tyrannized (καταπονούμενον) emotionally and psychologically to the point of being worn out by the arrogance and proliferation of the evil that surrounded him. Perhaps, Lot even felt tempted to engage in the evil of his day because of his own moral depravity. Thus, his struggle was not only with the immorality outside of him but also with the immorality inside of him.

Here δίκαιον, along with δίκαιος and δικαίαν in the next verse, refer to Lot’s being correctly oriented towards God

inwardly, such that he had a desire for biblical, moral goodness instead of evil, in spite of his own moral depravity. In other words, he was truly a genuinely, divinely changed man who had authentic belief. In the same way, the *ἀδίκους* of v. 9 are those who remain oriented away from God in the midst of their moral depravity.

²⁹ βλέματι γὰρ καὶ ἀκοῇ ὁ δίκαιος ἐγκατοικῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς ἡμέραν ἐξ ἡμέρας ψυχὴν δικαίαν ἀνόμοις ἔργοις ἐβασάνιζεν – See notes in previous verse.

³⁰ οἶδεν κύριος εὐσεβεῖς ἐκ πειρασμοῦ ῥύεσθαι, ἀδίκους δὲ εἰς ἡμέραν κρίσεως κολαζομένους τηρεῖν – Peter puts the responsibility for the outcome of people’s lives in response to the evil around them and in them squarely on the shoulders of God—ultimately. It is He who knows how to make people survive the temptation toward evil and the testing of their belief when they persistently encounter the unpleasant evil surrounding them by causing them to persevere in their belief, and it is He who knows how to make people continue in their rebellion against Him with the final result that He punishes them with eternal destruction.

Thus, this verse is one of the most encouraging in the Bible, if a person adequately understands the depth of his own moral depravity and human susceptibility to abandon belief in God in the midst of the various pressures of life here on earth to give up embracing God as one’s ultimate desire. For example, in the midst of intense pain, a person will naturally want immediate relief from the pain rather than future escape from God’s eternal condemnation. In the midst of intense immoral temptation, a person will want immediate satisfaction of the immoral impulse rather than future escape from God’s eternal condemnation. In the midst of unpleasant immorality and lack of moral self-restraint, a person will think about giving up on God who has promised relief from this unpleasantness and discomfort—because it feels just too far off, perhaps.

³¹ μάλιστα δὲ τοὺς ὀπίσω σαρκὸς ἐν ἐπιθυμίᾳ ἴσχυος πορευομένους, καὶ κυριότητος καταφρονούντας, τολμητὰ ἀνόμους, ἡ δόξα οὐ τρέμουσιν βλασφημοῦντες – Peter describes the false teachers as men who are merely following their natural born moral rebellion against God that comprises a fundamental desire for that which is evil. In addition, they are completely ignoring the clear authority and right that God, His Messiah, and the apostles have to correct and instruct them in their understanding of reality.

These false teachers should be shaking in their boots whenever they reject the truth of God which He has revealed through Jesus the Messiah and through his apostles such as Peter, James, and John, who personally heard God speak on the Mt. of Transfiguration. They think that they are talking respectfully and correctly about “majestic things,” i.e., of God, but, in fact, they are being insolent and insubordinate towards God. They are only pretending to be good, when they are committed to evil.

³² ὅπου ἄγγελοι ἰσχυροὶ καὶ δυνάμει μείζονες ὄντες οὐ φέρουσιν κατ’ αὐτῶν ἑκτὸς κυρίου βλάσφημον κρίσιν – Again, we have more information in this statement about Peter’s cosmology. There are invisible beings, *angeloi*, who have a kind of access to God such that they could go before Him and appeal to Him to deal immediately with these false teachers who are rebels against God. The inference is that, instead, these *angeloi* are waiting patiently for God’s final judgment.

Peter is also saying that these invisible beings are, in some sense, more powerful than human beings, which seems to give them the right to go before God and express their opinions about these rebellious people.

³³ Οὗτοι δὲ ὡς ἄλογα ζῶα ἡγενηθέντα φυσικῶς εἰς ἄλογον καὶ φθορὰν ἐν οἷς ἀγνοοῦσιν βλασφημοῦντες, ἐν τῇ φθορᾷ αὐτῶν καὶ φθορήσονται – Peter indicates that human rebellion against God causes people to act like animals who have no moral compass to speak of and who behave simply on the basis of their instincts and physical desires, except, in the case of human beings, their instincts and desires are of a rebellious quality with respect to God. Animals cannot weigh the moral quality of their choices. If they desire to eat, they pursue eating, regardless of the means and consequences by which they go about fulfilling their desire. If they desire to have sex, they pursue having sex, regardless of the means and consequences by which they go about fulfilling their desire. If they desire to get from point A to point B, they pursue making the journey, regardless of the means and consequences by which they go about fulfilling their desire.

People, who are committed to rebelling against God, are no different in their seeking to fulfill their desires. The means and consequences of their actions, especially the eternal consequences, are of no concern to them. The end justifies the means.

Peter also indicates that the thinking and behavior of these rebellious people are nothing less than irrational (*ἄλογα*). Their thinking and actions defy logic, when the truth of God and His justice and mercy are taken into account. In other words, it makes no sense that people would pursue immorality in the light of who God is and what He threatens, which is His justice, of which Paul tells us in Romans 1 everyone is aware.

Peter also states that these irrationally thinking individuals have been born in line with the natural order of things for animals, who are appropriately hunted and killed by man, typically for food. However, these irrational, human rebels against God will be hunted by God and killed by Him. This is to say that God will basically scour the earth looking for them and will destroy them once He finds them. As Peter says in 1 Peter 2:8, “to [this end] they were appointed.”

Peter also indicates that their statements about reality constitute a total disrespect for truth. In his day and among his readers, these are people who speak confidently about the importance of following the Mosaic Covenant, but they basically are intellectual morons while claiming to be so smart.

The outcome of these people’s lives as human beings motivated to think and speak irrationally will be a disappearance of their very existence when God destroys them for their commitment to immorality and evil.

³⁴ ἀδικούμενοι μισθὸν ἀδικίας, ἡδονὴν ἠγοούμενοι τὴν ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἔτρυφόν. σπίλοι καὶ μῶμοι ἐντρυφῶντες ἐν ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις αὐτῶν συνευωχούμενοι ὑμῖν – κομιοῦμενοι ^h A C 5. 33. 81. 307. 436. 442. 642. 1448. 1611. 1735. 1739. 2344. 2492 Byz latt sy^h co | txt P⁷² N* B P Ψ 1175. 1243. 1852 sy^{ph} l – While ἀδικούμενοι (= suffering wrong) gets to basically the same thing, κομιοῦμενοι makes more sense, i.e., that unbelievers receive the proper wage of their evil, which is destruction.

The first present participle κομιοῦμενοι most likely follows the sense of the previous future tense verb φθαρήσονται. Thus Peter is saying that these people, who are abject rebels against God, will be paid an appropriate wage for their moral depravity—God’s justice and being eternally destroyed, even while they consider it a delightful aspect of human life that they can respond to their physical desires and do whatever they want to do to satisfy and fulfill them—all in the name of God and Jesus as the Messiah.

In Titus 3:3, Paul lists ἡδονή as one of the vices which even he was pursuing as a committed, religious Jew. Thus, it refers to basic human pleasures that serve people in their rebellion against God, whether non-religious or religious pleasures. James mentions these as the source of conflicts between people, probably when the pursuit of satisfying the desires that they feel collide, so that each person will attempt to hinder the other in reaching his goals. In Luke 7:25, Jesus uses τρυφή to refer to the luxury of the wealthy, i.e., their living in comfort as a result of their self-indulgence. Here, Peter is referring to Jewish false teachers who consider it a great comfort to pursue satisfying their human religious desires in rebellion against God.

Looking at other uses of συνευωχέομαι, it could mean simply spending time with others, i.e., hanging out with them. This makes sense unless Peter is talking specifically about some kind of kosher meals that Jews had together. One might think that these people who reject truth would shun those who embrace truth. However, Peter claims that they are right there in the midst of authentic believers, but they are clearly interpreting the opportunity to be together differently. The believers view their time together as genuine acts of worship towards Yahweh and His Messiah. The non-believers view their corporate gatherings as acts of worship towards Yahweh, but, because their thinking is irrational as Peter has explained, their actions bear no authentic spiritual quality. Again, they are like spiritually incapable and logically challenged animals.

³⁵ ὀφθαλμοὺς ἔχοντες ὁμοιωμένους ἰσχυροῦς καὶ ἀκαταπαύστους ἁμαρτίας, δελεάζοντες ψυχὰς ἀστρίκτους, καρδίαν γεγυμνασμένην πλεονεξίας ἔχοντες, κατάρως τέκνα – Peter refers to the *spiritual* adultery of the false teachers who are claiming that the Mosaic Covenant is more important than the Messiah. Their inner “eyes” so to speak look to commit evil by rejecting the truth of the NT message of the Messiah. They never stop pursuing evil in the midst of hoping to win co-rebels to their cause by encouraging people who are not wholly established in the apostolic message to believe in the nature of reality that has its focus on the Mosaic Covenant and not on Jesus. Cf. Ezekiel 16:38 – Thus I will judge you [rebellious Israelites] like women who commit adultery (תִּישָׁן זְנוּנִים) (ἐκδικήσει μοιχαλίδος) or shed blood are judged; and I will bring on you the blood of wrath and jealousy. Cf. Ezekiel 23:45 – But they, righteous men, will judge them with the judgment of adulteresses (תִּישָׁן זְנוּנִים) (ἐκδικήσει μοιχαλίδος) and with the judgment of women who shed blood, because they are adulteresses and blood is on their hands.

The commitment to moral depravity of these false teachers results in their being unfaithful to God, longing constantly to pursue immorality, even religious immorality, and seeking to have others join them in their false worship of God. This will satisfy their greed for human approval, but it will also result in their being judged as rebels by God and receiving the appropriate consequence of eternal destruction. Thus, they stand to be cursed and not blessed by God.

³⁶ καταλείποντες εὐθείαν ὁδὸν ἐπλανήθησαν, ἐξᾠλοῦθησαν τῇ ὁδῷ τοῦ Βαλαάμ τοῦ ἑβραίου, ὅς μισθὸν ἀδικίας ἠγάπησεν – Rather than having walked down the road of truth, especially the apostolic truth, which Peter calls straight because of its moral boundaries, keeping immorality outside the road, these teachers of false ideas wander constantly into the rough along the road that is characterized by evil, just as the OT false prophet Balaam did in Numbers 22-24. He was enticed by the wealth that he would receive from Balak, who hired him to curse the Israelites. But God stopped him on his way to meet Balak and convinced him to say only what He told him. Otherwise, he would have died.

³⁷ ἐλεγξιν δὲ ἔσχεν ἰδίας παρανομίας· ὑποζύγιον ἄφωνον ἐν ἀνθρώπου φωνῇ φθεγγόμενον ἐκόλυσεν τὴν τοῦ προφήτου παραφροσύνην – God miraculously communicated to Balaam through a donkey when he was headed towards destruction. Peter’s implication is that only a miracle of God can change these false teachers so that they appropriately believe and pursue the truth of the apostolic message. Otherwise, they will continue to spew false ideas in line with their immoral passions as he goes on to explain in vs. 17-19.

By using the word παραφροσύνην = insanity, Peter is indicating just how bizarre it is for any human being to oppose God.

³⁸ οὗτοί εἰσιν πηγὰὶ ἄνυδροι καὶ ὀμίχλαι ὑπὸ λαίλαπος ἐλαυνόμεναι, οἷς ὁ ζόφος τοῦ σκοτοῦς ἑτετήρηται – Peter uses these metaphors to highlight the fact that people who are promoting lies in regard to reality are both empty of good ideas and headed for big trouble. First, they are “waterless springs.” They think that they provide a satisfying drink of good ideas to those who listen to them, but their ideas are basically without content, because they are false. They are “dark clouds in the sky” that are being driven along by the winds of a storm. In this case, the storm is the full force of evil in the world that relentlessly assaults the minds and emotions of all human beings. However, the end result for these people will be the darkness of destruction and annihilation by God.

³⁹ ὑπέρογκα γὰρ ματαιότητος φθεγγόμενοι δελεάζουσιν ἐν ἑπιθυμίαις σαρκὸς ἠσέλγειαις τοὺς ὀλίγως [ῥῶτως] ἄποφεύγοντας τοὺς ἐν πλάνῃ ἀναστρεφόμενους – ὀλιγὼς ⁷² ⁸² A B Ψ 33. 436 latt? sy? co? ἰ ολιγον 2344 latt? sy? co? ἰ *lat* N* C P 048. 5. 81. 307. 442. 642. 1175. 1243. 1448. 1611. 1735. 1739. 1852. 2492 Byz |

“boastful things...purpose” = a pursuit of the Mosaic Covenant from a legalistic perspective? Most likely. Peter says that these people who are committed to evil right in the midst of authentic Jewish believers constantly encourage in one way or another the believers to abandon the truth of Jesus as the Messiah, and the fact of the matter is that the believers in a sense barely avoid being swallowed up by the attractiveness of their professional pleadings. These false teachers, who are driven by their own strong immoral desires that result in actions that are completely outside the boundaries of God’s moral commandments, are very persuasive, and the implication is that only a clear grasp of the biblical and apostolic message will prevent someone from concluding that their ideas are true. Because of what Peter has already argued in 2:9, authentic believers “barely” escape being enticed into rejecting truth by virtue of God’s faithfulness to them to cause them to persevere in their belief so as to remain qualified for His eternal mercy and the outcome, eternal life.

⁴⁰ ἐλευθερίαν αὐτοῖς ἐπαγγελλόμενοι, αὐτοὶ δοῦλοι ὑπάρχοντες τῆς φθορᾶς· ᾧ γὰρ τις ἤττηται, τούτῳ ἔδουλωται – To be coherent with the phrase “slaves of destruction,” Peter means “freedom from condemnation and destruction” by the word ἐλευθερίαν. The false Jewish teachers are promising the Jewish believers in Jesus the Messiah freedom from God’s condemnation by promoting merely the idea of obeying the Mosaic Covenant. However, Peter says that these false teachers are going to be overcome by God’s destroying them, because it is to this that they are chained like slaves because of their innate rebellion against God, from which they have not escaped. Maybe they are accepting to a degree that Jesus is a king. But they are missing the important point of his being their only appropriate advocate for God’s mercy. They have become enslaved by the moral depravity that has overcome them and led them to reject the truth, so that they are promoting false ideas, lies about the nature of reality.

⁴¹ εἰ γὰρ ἀποφυγόντες τὰ μιάσματα τοῦ κόσμου ἐν ἐπιγνώσει τοῦ κυρίου [ἡμῶν] καὶ σωτήρος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, τούτοις δὲ πάλιν ἐμπλακέντες ἤττωνται, γέγονεν αὐτοῖς τὰ ἔσχατα χεῖρονα τῶν πρώτων – Peter intimates that the false teachers had at one time engaged the ideas of Jesus as the Messiah and even appeared to believe them as true, thus also appearing to have defeated the ideas and lies of the world in their own minds and actions. However, they have become overcome and defeated by these false ideas so that they have returned to promoting and pursuing only the Mosaic Covenant at the expense of Jesus’ full messiahship.

Peter says that the result is that, by going back to raw rebellion against God, they have made matters worse for themselves. How? Probably Peter means that, on an existential level, they have made it even more difficult for themselves to see clearly the truth and to embrace it with authentic belief.

⁴² κρεῖττον γὰρ ἦν αὐτοῖς μὴ ἐπεγνωκέναι τὴν ὁδὸν τῆς δικαιοσύνης ἢ ἐπιγνοῦσιν ὑποστρέψαι ἐκ τῆς παραδοθείσης αὐτοῖς ἀγίας ἐντολῆς – This sounds like Hebrews 6:4-6 – 6:4 It is impossible to renew again to repentance those who were once enlightened, such that they have tasted of the gift of heaven, have become partners with the Holy Spirit, 6:5 and have tasted of the good message of God, specifically the significant consequences of it with respect to the coming age, 6:6 and have fallen away, in so far as they crucify again for themselves the Son of God and disgrace him publicly.

The idea that Peter seems to be setting forth is, from a human standpoint, a person is more likely to embrace the biblical message if he has not encountered it before than if he has encountered it and then turned away from it by distorting it.

⁴³ συμβέβηκεν αὐτοῖς τὸ τῆς ἀληθοῦς παρομιίας· κύων ἐπιστρέψας ἐπὶ τὸ ἴδιον ἐξέραμα, καὶ ὅς λουσαμένη εἰς κυλισμὸν βορβόρου – cf. Proverbs 26:11 – Like a dog that returns to its vomit (כָּוֶן שָׁבַע לְרֵגְלֵהוּ) (ὡσπερ κύων ὅταν ἐπέλθῃ ἐπὶ τὸν ἑαυτοῦ ἔμετον) is a fool who repeats his folly.

The point of these parables—if a person is animal-like instead of truly human, then he will not be able to refrain from doing really stupid things in comparison to following the biblical message. Instead of staying away from lies that he has apparently rejected, he will ingest them all over again. Instead of staying away from dirty ideas that he has apparently been cleansed of, he will immerse himself in them all over again. Thus, these proverbs have a definite negative connotation. An unbeliever who hears the truth and appears to believe it, but who then gives up the truth is like an animal either who eats his own vomit, thus liking something that ought to be repulsive, or who prefers being covered with mud above being clean, thus, again, liking something which he ought to avoid.

⁴⁴ Ταύτην ἤδη, ἀγαπητοί, δευτέραν ὁμῖν γράφω ἐπιστολήν, ἐν αἷς διεγείρω ὑμῶν ἐν ὑπομνήσει τὴν εἰλικρινῆ διάνοιαν – While “letter” (ἐπιστολήν) is singular, the relative pronoun after “in,” i.e., “which” (ἐν αἷς) is plural, indicating that Peter is referring in the relative clause “in which I am stimulating/waking up...reminder” to both the letters that he wrote to these Jewish readers. Thus, it is appropriate to translate the relative pronoun “which” (αἷς) with the word “both.” However, if I am right that 1 Peter is written to Gentiles and 2 Peter is written to Jews, then 1 Peter is not the letter which is included in the relative pronoun “which” (αἷς). Therefore, we do not have the first letter.

Nevertheless, if the letter of Paul to these Jews was Hebrews, then we can at least conclude that Peter is revealing even more of the situation in this Jewish community, that they have supposed “Christians” right in their midst who are encouraging them to pay more attention to the Mosaic Covenant and its animal sacrifices than to Jesus as the Messiah and the only sacrifice/High Priest that God will accept for granting eternal mercy to sinful human beings. Thus, the persecution to which Paul alludes in Hebrews is definitely coming from the outside, but Peter is talking about pressure from inside their own gathering of believers, i.e., from false teachers who are insistent on preserving the religiosity of

the community at the expense of actually pursuing the truth of the Messiah.

Of course, this is not at all different from so-called Christian churches who are more insistent on maintaining their standing in the church culture by promoting their programs, traditional doctrines, religious ceremonies, status within the Christian world, etc., rather than genuinely being concerned about the biblical message, even while claiming to be all about studying and teaching the Bible.

Peter's desire with both letters is to stimulate and/or wake up his readers' intention and purpose in life to remain faithful Christians and acquire eternal life and God's mercy through Jesus. Peter is reminding them of the same ideas and information that the OT prophets proclaim and that apostles repeat through what they were taught by Jesus (see the next verse).

⁴⁵ μνησθῆναι τῶν προειρημένων ῥημάτων ὑπὸ τῶν ἁγίων προφητῶν καὶ τῆς τῶν ἀποστόλων ἑμῶν ἐντολῆς τοῦ κυρίου καὶ σωτῆρος – In 2:1, Peter referred to false prophets among the OT Israelites. While sometimes the word prophet is used to refer to accurate NT spokesmen, who proclaimed the gospel of Jesus as the Messiah alongside the apostles, it would seem here that Peter is talking about OT prophets who proclaimed God's message about the coming Messiah, i.e., his parousia where he makes his grand entrance into the world and into Israel as their champion, king, and priest. In addition to them, Peter is referring to the truth as Jesus himself presented it to his apostles, who then passed it on to others. Thus Peter is saying that he is saying nothing different from what both the OT and Jesus have taught. As he said in 1:16, he is not speaking of “ingeniously concocted myths.” He is speaking of things that are absolutely true from God.

Peter refers specifically to “your apostles,” the three men, Peter, James, and John, who presented the NT information to these readers (cf. 1:18-21). He wants to emphasize the relationship between these three men and his readers, because they have spoken to them the truth on behalf of Jesus. It makes sense to qualify “apostles” with the “your” since it is within the boundaries of τῆς and ἐντολῆς even though the Majority Text has ἡμῶν.

All this information can be placed under the label “the apostolic message and instruction from God,” which Peter indicates with the word ἐντολῆς = commandment typically. The apostolic message is God's instruction and commandment to humanity to repent and seek His eternal mercy through Jesus as Messiah and priest. It is this that Peter wants to urge his readers to remember.

And Jesus is both Lord, i.e., Master, and Savior, i.e., champion who has “fought” and will “fight” on their behalf to ensure their enemies (God, their own sin, their earthly enemies who hate the Jews) are eventually “vanquished” so that God grants them eternal mercy and not justice.

⁴⁶ τοῦτο πρῶτον γινώσκοντες ὅτι ἐλεύσονται ἐπ' ἑσχάτων τῶν ἡμερῶν [ἐν] ἐμπαίγμονῃ ἐμπαίκται κατὰ τὰς ἰδίας ἐπιθυμίας αὐτῶν πορευόμενοι – After encouraging his readers to remember certain truths that he mentioned in chapters 1 & 2, Peter now turns towards the future and “first” wants these Christians to remember that, as the time draws near for Jesus to return and make his grand appearance as King and priest, people (Jews?) will ridicule the Bible and God's truth. Most likely, Peter's perspective is not global but confined to the Middle East as found even in the OT prophets, e.g., Daniel. Nevertheless, we should not be surprised if there is a worldwide movement that mocks Christianity, especially as the appearance of the Man of Lawlessness mentioned by Paul in 2 Thessalonians approaches. He will be the ultimate scoffer of truth, so that people who support him will ridicule Christianity and Christians as he does. It certainly seems that we are seeing such an attitude growing in our own day. It is vital that Christians remember Paul's own words in Romans 1:16, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.” There is absolutely nothing to be embarrassed when it comes to following a man who was crucified and then rose from the dead two thousand years ago.

Those who ridicule Christianity and its message of the coming Messiah will simply be proceeding down the path of rebelling against God according to their own innate desires to do what is evil. These are vessels of wrath according to Paul in Romans 9, who will bring glory to God when He condemns and destroys them eventually.

⁴⁷ καὶ λέγοντες· ποῦ ἐστὶν ἡ ἐπαγγελία τῆς παρουσίας αὐτοῦ; ἀφ' ἧς γὰρ οἱ πατέρες ἔκοιμήθησαν, πάντα οὕτως διαμένει ἀπ' ἀρχῆς κτίσεως – Three options – 1) Jews who know their OTs and have given up on God, thus mocking the truth and Him; 2) Jews who know their OTs and are sure that the Messiah's coming is still a long way off because Jesus as having been crucified cannot be the Messiah; 3) Gentiles who are speaking in general and saying that the Bible with its message of Christianity is simply a bunch of garbage.

If #3, then Peter is not describing the exact “theology” of the ridiculers as much as he is simply alluding to their overall mentality that looks at the world and comes to the conclusion that things have been occurring pretty much as they are for a long, long time, and they will continue to do so for a long, long time. Therefore, if “God,” whoever He might be and if He actually exists as the Bible says that He does, has “promised” to cause His Messiah to appear, He must have forgotten to do so, which means it probably is never going to happen.

If #2, then these are Jews who believe the Messiah will be their champion without having to be rejected by the Jewish leadership and die.

If #1, then disgruntled Jews who have lost their faith in Yahweh.

Because of 3:8-10 and the issue of the importance of waiting for God to finish His story when and how He wants, #1 makes the most sense, especially with the references to biblical concepts and stories.

As a result, the “fathers' falling asleep” is a reference to Jewish OT patriarchs such as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as well as to generations of Jews after them up to the time of Peter and his contemporaries. In addition, “the beginning of

the creation” is a reference to these scoffers’ considering the “creation,” i.e., the whole cosmos, not to have been made by warring gods or to have existed from eternity past, but to Yahweh Himself. For example, it came into existence through the actions of a god, e.g., the Babylonian god Marduk’s killing the goddess Tiamat and forming the heavens and the earth out of her dead body.

Certainly, today, people believe that the present reality’s beginning may or may not have involved an actual act of creation. And some philosophers and scientists believe that the cosmos has always existed and is eternal.

IF #3, this quote identifies the people who are making fun of the idea of God’s sending His Messiah as Gentile unbelievers and not as the same people in chapter 2 who are Jewish false teachers. Certainly, the false teachers would most likely embrace the notion of a coming Messiah and not ridicule it, even as they focus on the Mosaic Covenant for asserting their Jewishness. But if they became disgruntled with God, then they would mock God instead. Could Peter be identifying what he would consider to be the future philosophical and theological climate within the Roman Empire as simply rejecting the biblical God who is directing the story of the universe towards its definite culmination of the establishment of the eternal Davidic Kingdom? Maybe, but again vs. 8-10 seem to point in the direction of Jews who have become impatient with God.

Cf. of the leaders of Israel, Isaiah 56:12 “Come,” they say, “let us get wine, and let us drink heavily of strong drink. And tomorrow will be like today, only more so.”

⁴⁸ Λανθάνει γὰρ αὐτοὺς τοῦτο θέλοντας ὅτι οὐρανοὶ ἦσαν ἔκπαλαι καὶ γῆ ἕξ ὕδατος καὶ δι’ ὕδατος ἑσυνεστῶσα τῷ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγῳ – How would people recognize this truth without reading the Bible, and specifically Genesis 1?

Therefore, Peter must be talking about people who know the OT, and Jews are the most likely candidates here.

He is saying that disgruntled Jews, who want to believe that the overall existence of things is never going to change, are also unwilling to take into account the obvious fact that it was a long time between God’s bringing the creation into existence as described by Moses in Genesis 1 and His destroying the earth by flooding it with water during the time of Noah as described in Genesis 6-9. They are rejecting the Bible’s message and therefore rejecting the transcendent Creator as described by the Bible. They are failing to take into account that these events occurred within the story that God has formulated and is telling by means of cosmic history. Therefore, long times seem to be God’s pattern, or at least His right, and everything happens according to the story that God continues to imagine into existence. In other words, coming to grips with what it means for there to be a transcendent Creator whose action of making His story exist is essential for understanding and living in reality. People who ignore God even after He has demonstrated His justice as told specifically by the Bible with events such as the flood will suffer His eternal justice, judgment, and destruction. God is not to be ignored, and the Bible is not to be trivialized.

⁴⁹ δι’ ὧν ἰδὼν ὁ τότε κόσμος ὕδατι κατακλυσθεὶς ἀπόλετο – Again, how would people know about the story of the flood without reading the OT? Thus, it makes sense that Peter is referring to disgruntled Jews who do know their Bibles. The Majority Text uses δι’ ὧν, but ὅν probably makes more sense, that that Peter is referring to the λόγος of God, i.e. the story that He imagines into existence. Thus, after the creation as told poetically in Genesis 1, God destroyed the earth with the flood of Genesis 6-9 during the time of Noah. In this way, the earthly setup of human existence went through a radical transition, not that people were any different after the flood, because they all were and are still morally depraved. Nevertheless, an explicit demonstration of God’s wrath, judgment, and destruction had now been made, and the Bible speaks of it as a warning to all who read about it. In the light of this clear demonstration, the Jews as students of the Bible should take God’s angry and destructive response to immorality just that much more seriously. However, Peter is saying that they did and do not. Instead, they mock God and His truth. But God will still have the last say in the matter.

Thus, Peter is pointing out the connection between the water of the creation poem of Genesis 1 and its use for the purposes of God’s judgment and destruction of unbelievers at the time of Noah. Then 3:7 goes on to indicate that fire, i.e., God’s use of a different but equally destructive element in the creation, will be His instrument of choice to judge and destroy the nations and the Jews (?) when Jesus returns (?).

Cf. **2 Thessalonians 1:6** For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, **7** and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, **8** dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. **9** These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, **10** when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed — for our testimony to you was believed.

⁵⁰ οἱ δὲ νῦν οὐρανοὶ καὶ ἡ γῆ τῷ αὐτῷ λόγῳ τεθησαυρισμένοι εἰσὶν ἑπιπυροῦμενοι εἰς ἡμέραν κρίσεως καὶ ἀπολείας ὅτων ἀσεβῶν ἀνθρώπων –

ἵ αὐτοῦ N C 5. 307. 436. 442^c. 642. 1243. 1448. 1735. 2492 Byz sy cv l

Most Bibles consider the αὐτῷ to be correct and translate it as “same.” This makes sense—that Peter is referring to the “same story” in which the events of the flood occurred. Thus, within the same story, the events of another judgment and destruction of the present realm will occur—but this time, with the destructive force of fire, not water, and in regard to the entire (?) creation, not just the earth. The first explicit demonstration of God’s wrath, judgment, and destruction involved only the earth. The next and last demonstration will include both the heavens and the earth. In other words, God will destroy this entire (?) creation.

Two options for what Peter is talking about here in 3:7-14 – 1) The final judgment and complete destruction of the

present realm/creation followed by God's making a whole new creation as described in the vision of Revelation 21-22; 2) The judgment of God of all unbelieving Jews and some unbelieving Gentiles with His inaugurating the restored Kingdom of Israel as the Millennial Kingdom as described in the visions of Revelation 16:17 through chapter 20. If I am right that Peter's mockers are disgruntled Jews, than #2 makes more sense.

Just to include these notes as something to think through, if #1 is correct, then—in the light of the long time between God's bringing the creation into existence and destroying the earth with its human life with a flood of water during the time of Noah, Peter emphasizes that God's plan to destroy the entire present creation with fire will still happen. It is as though the present earth and its setup, along with the heavens, are being stored in a safe place for one last act of destruction on God's part. And God will accomplish this last and final destruction with fire, not water. In addition, like God's eliminating rebellious human beings from the earth in Noah's time, He will bring about one last assessment of humanity and will destroy those who have remained committed to rejecting Him. The implication is, though, that, just as God preserved certain, chosen human beings through the judgment of the flood, He will do the same through the judgment of the fire.

But if #2 is correct, then this fiery destruction of the present realm will be centered in Israel and involve mainly the unbelieving Jews as described, for example in the following passage from Isaiah –
[Isaiah 66:15](#) For behold, the LORD will come in fire and His chariots like the whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire. [16](#) For the LORD will execute judgment by fire and by His sword on all flesh, and those slain by the LORD will be many. [17](#) “Those who sanctify and purify themselves to go to the gardens, following one in the center, who eat swine's flesh, detestable things and mice, will come to an end altogether,” declares the LORD.

There is also [Joel 2:28](#) It will come about after this that I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind [flesh, i.e., Jews on the land of Israel during the Millennial Kingdom]; and your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. [29](#) Even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days. [30](#) I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth, blood, fire and columns of smoke. [31](#) The sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes.

⁵¹ Ἐν δὲ τούτῳ μὴ λανθανέτω ὑμᾶς, ἀγαπητοί, ὅτι μία ἡμέρα παρὰ κυρίῳ ὡς χίλια ἔτη καὶ χίλια ἔτη ὡς ἡμέρα μία – While all this that he has been talking about is something that the scoffing unbelievers are unwilling to recognize, Peter wants to make sure the recipients of this letter are willing to recognize certain important truths about the apparent “delay” between the revealing of the Messiah at his first coming and his appearance at his second coming. He encourages them to understand that length of time is not an impediment to God with respect to His keeping His promises, including the one of the Messiah's return. While unbelievers might choose to let certain aspects of reality escape their notice, Peter knows that people who have been inwardly changed by God will not ignore the fact that He is the transcendent storyteller of the history of the entire creation. Therefore, whenever it suits Him to cause something to happen within the story, He brings it about. If the length of time between it and some other event related to it is one day or a thousand years, this does not affect God's ability to cause it to occur. All that matters is God's desire to write the event into the story at the particular moment that He chooses.

⁵² οὐ βραδύνει ὁ κύριος τῆς ἐπαγγελίας, ὅς τινες βραδύτητα ἠγοῦνται, ἀλλὰ μακροθυμεῖ εἰς ὑμᾶς, μὴ βουλομένους τινὰς ἀπολέσθαι ἀλλὰ πάντας εἰς μετάνοιαν χωρῆσαι –
εἰς ἡμᾶς 307. 442. 642. 2492 Byz | δι ὑμας N A Ψ 5. 33. 436. 1611. 1852 latt sy sa | txt p⁷² B C P 048^{vid}. 81. 1175. 1243. 1448. 1735. 1739. 2344

Three options – 1) Peter is saying that God is being patient “towards you,” i.e., towards his readers whom God desires to persevere and prove that they have authentic faith; 2) Peter is saying that God is being patient “towards us,” i.e., all humanity whom He desires to come to authentic faith and be saved; 3) Peter is saying that God is being patient “towards us,” i.e., the Jews whom He desires to cease rejecting their Messiah and come to authentic faith in him. It is making more sense to treat this statement by Peter as a comment about God's plans for the Jews and, therefore, to conclude that the “to us” (εἰς ἡμᾶς) is the correct reading.

Two options – 1) The apparent delay in the return of the Messiah is because of God's having chosen certain human beings to be rescued from his wrath and destruction, and some of these human beings have not yet become believers. Therefore, God is waiting until all whom He has chosen achieve authentic belief and repentance before He destroys the world with fire. 2) The apparent delay in the return of the Messiah is because God is reluctant to judge, condemn, and destroy the Jews in spite of their rebellion against Him. Therefore, He is truly being patient and waiting to see if those Jews who have not yet believed in Jesus the Messiah will change their minds and believe.

#2 makes more sense in the light of the other passages that describe God's patience, while it also the Jews who are thinking that God is hesitating to fulfill His promise to them because He for some reason has lost interest in them. Cf. [Ezekiel 18:23](#) “Do I have any pleasure in the death of the wicked,” declares the Lord GOD, “rather than that he should turn from his ways and live? Cf. [Ezekiel 18:32](#) “For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies,” declares the Lord GOD. “Therefore, repent and live.” Cf. the several passages in Revelation where God provides an interlude and delay in the judgment of the Jews before He finally completes the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord as described succinctly in Malachi 4.

As a result, also, it makes sense to conclude that the variant εἰς ἡμᾶς is the correct reading.

Thus, probably many of Peter's readers' unbelieving Jewish contemporaries think that God's delay is His having

forgotten His promises and is just being irresponsible—or simply not interested in being the God whom He first said He was—or that God does not exist so that these Jews are atheists. We can understand by the Jews’ history how they could come to this conclusion so that just as they think God has forgotten about them (or He does not even exist), they have chosen to forget about Him!

Cf. 2 Thessalonians 1:5ff. – “[The Thessalonians’ belief in the midst of persecution and suffering] is proof of God’s morally perfect judgment, so that you may be considered worthy of the Kingdom of God, for which you are indeed suffering...” Paul expresses a similar perspective that God’s patient is also a time when He takes people of authentic belief through difficult times in order to mature their belief and commitment to the biblical truth, thus making it clear that He will rescue eternally those who persevere in their belief and will destroy eternally those who remain steadfast in their rejection of the biblical message. Thus, it is always good to see God’s delay in judgment as His kind and loving patience towards the Jews and His faithfulness to His chosen believers to cause them to persevere in their faith and acquire eternal mercy and life.

Peter would naturally include himself in the group of people who are marked for salvation by God and towards whom God is being faithful as He matures their belief and demonstrates its authenticity.

⁵³Ἦξει δὲ ἡμέρα κυρίου ὡς κλέπτῃς, ἐν ἧ ὁ οὐρανὸς ῥοιζηδὸν παρελεύσονται στοιχεῖα δὲ καυσούμενα λυθήσεται καὶ γῆ καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ ἔργα [ουχ] εὐρεθήσεται –
εὐρεθήσεται N B P 1175. 1448. 1739st. 1852 sy^{ph mss txt} sy^{hmg}; εὐρεθήσεται λυόμενα p⁷²; αφανισθησονται C; κατακαησεται A 048. 33. 81. 307. 436. 442. 642. 1611. 1739^{cl}. 2344 Byz vg^{cl} sy^{ph mss v.l.} sy^h; Cyp; κατακαησονται 5. 1243. 1735. 2492; txt sy^{ph mss} sa cv

It is just hard to think that Peter would refer to the end of the restored Kingdom of Israel as that which his readers should await and hasten when there is the entirety of the millennial kingdom to go through before God creates a completely new cosmos according to the Revelation 21, and when their behavior now will culminate in their participating the Kingdom of Israel. Thus they should “make every effort to be found by God in a state of shalom, spotless and without blemish” when the Day of the Lord arrives (cf. 3 Peter 3:11-14)!

Nevertheless, as above, there are two options for the “Day of the Lord” – 1) The final judgment and complete destruction of the present realm/creation followed by God’s making a whole new creation as described in the vision of Revelation 21-22, so that this “Day” begins with the judgment of the Jews before the millennial kingdom and ends with the destruction of unbelievers after the millennial kingdom; 2) The judgment of God of all unbelieving Jews and some unbelieving Gentiles with His inaugurating the restored Kingdom of Israel as the Millennial Kingdom as described in the visions of Revelation 16:17 through chapter 20, all of which implies #1 too.

Therefore, two options for the “heavens” passing away “with a loud, rushing noise,” etc. – 1) Part of the complete disappearance of the present cosmos with its laws of physics to make room for a completely different and eternal cosmos; 2) Part of the rearrangement of the present cosmos to demonstrate God’s final judgment of the Jews to make room for the millennial kingdom.

Therefore, two options for the “earth/land and the works in it” being burned up – 1) The entire earth disappears to make ready for the eternal earth; 2) the land of Israel as it was with most unbelieving Jews and their efforts to build a society that does not worship God is destroyed to make room for the millennial kingdom (or the whole earth with the worldwide rebellion against God by nations for the most part during human history to make room for even unbelievers in the Gentile nations submitting to Jesus and transformed believers on the land of Israel during the millennial kingdom).

Here are the 16 passages in the OT prophets that refer to the “Day of the Lord” –

[Isaiah 13:6](#) Wail, for the **day of the LORD** is near! It will come as destruction from the Almighty. [It refers to the destruction of the southern Kingdom of Judah by the Babylonians which took place around 600 B.C.]

[Isaiah 13:9](#) Behold, the **day of the LORD** is coming, cruel, with fury and burning anger, to make the land a desolation; and He will exterminate its sinners from it. [Isaiah 13:9-16 is a separate prophecy regarding the end of either the age of rebellious Jews or all of rebellious mankind. Then Isaiah 13:17-22 returns to the ANE and God’s destruction of Babylon for its arrogant role in executing God’s judgment on the Jews around 600 B.C.]

[Isaiah 58:13](#) If because of the sabbath, you turn your foot from doing your own pleasure on My holy day, and call the sabbath a delight, the holy **day of the LORD** honorable, and honor it, desisting from your own ways, from seeking your own pleasure and speaking your own word, [God through Isaiah exhorts the Jews to honor the Sabbath commandment by granting rest to their laborers, thus making it a true day of the Lord in the sense that they recognize the divine origin of the commandment and the designation of the day.]

[Ezekiel 13:5](#) You have not gone up into the breaches, nor did you build the wall around the house of Israel to stand in the battle on the **day of the LORD**. [God’s indicts the false prophets of Judah in exile for not having repaired the “breaks” in the Jews’ disobedience of the Mosaic Covenant. Nor did they guard and protect the temple from false worship so that it would have stood when the “Day of the Lord” came about, i.e., when Nebuchadnezzar brought destruction on Jerusalem and the temple between 605 and 586 B.C.]

[Ezekiel 30:1](#) The word of the LORD came again to me saying, **2** “Son of man, prophesy and say, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, “Wail, ‘Alas for the day!’ **3** “For the day is near, even the day of the LORD is near; it will be a day of clouds, a time of doom for the nations. **4** “A sword will come upon Egypt, and anguish will be in Ethiopia; when the slain fall in Egypt, they take away her wealth, and her foundations are torn down. **5** “Ethiopia, Put, Lud, all Arabia, Libya and the

people of the land that is in league will fall with them by the sword.” [Because this prediction speaks of the judgment and destruction of multiple nations, it most likely refers to the return of Jesus who judges all nations by destroying all unbelieving Jews and some unbelieving Gentiles.]

Joel 1:15 Alas for the day! for the day of the LORD is near, and it will come as destruction from the Almighty. [The entire book of Joel is about the final time of God’s judgment on the Jews and His fulfilling His promise to make them a great nation. Therefore, this is a reference to the return of Jesus.]

Joel 2:1 Blow a trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm on My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming; surely it is near, **2** a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness. As the dawn is spread over the mountains, so there is a great and mighty people; there has never been anything like it, nor will there be again after it to the years of many generations. **3** A fire consumes before them and behind them a flame burns. The land is like the garden of Eden before them but a desolate wilderness behind them, and nothing at all escapes them. **4** Their appearance is like the appearance of horses; and like war horses, so they run. **5** With a noise as of chariots they leap on the tops of the mountains, like the crackling of a flame of fire consuming the stubble, like a mighty people arranged for battle. **6** Before them the people are in anguish; all faces turn pale. **7** They run like mighty men, they climb the wall like soldiers; and they each march in line, nor do they deviate from their paths. **8** They do not crowd each other, they march everyone in his path; when they burst through the defenses, they do not break ranks. **9** They rush on the city, they run on the wall; they climb into the houses, they enter through the windows like a thief. **10** Before them the earth quakes, the heavens tremble, the sun and the moon grow dark and the stars lose their brightness. **11** The LORD utters His voice before His army; surely His camp is very great, for strong is he who carries out His word. The day of the LORD is indeed great and very awesome, and who can endure it? [Like the previous quote from Joel, this is all about Jesus’ return and the final judgment of the Jews on the land of Israel, as well as the judgment and destruction of the army that has invaded Israel to destroy the Jews. But Jesus destroys them at the Battle of Armageddon.]

Joel 2:28 “It will come about after this that I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind [flesh, i.e., Jews during the Millennial Kingdom]; and your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. **29** Even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days. **30** I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth, blood, fire and columns of smoke. **31** The sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. [Here again is a reference to the final judgment of Israel and God’s changing the hearts of the 144,000 Jews whom He protected from the destruction of the Beast and his invading army that had gathered at Armageddon.]

Joel 3:14 Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision. [I include only this one verse, but the whole context is important to point out that Joel is referring to the judgment of the nations at the same time as the judgment of the Jews on the land of Israel. The main place of this judgment will be the Battle of Armageddon on the land of Israel.]

Amos 5:18 Alas, you who are longing for the day of the LORD, for what purpose will the day of the LORD be to you? It will be darkness and not light; **19** As when a man flees from a lion and a bear meets him, or goes home, leans his hand against the wall and a snake bites him. **20** Will not the day of the LORD be darkness instead of light, even gloom with no brightness in it? [This, too, must be the time when God rescues Israel from their enemies forever and yet judges them and destroys all unbelieving Jews before He does so. Therefore, this refers to the return of Jesus.]

Obadiah 15 “For the day of the LORD draws near on all the nations. As you have done, it will be done to you. Your dealings will return on your own head.” [While Obadiah addresses mainly the descendants of Esau who have chosen to take a stand against the Jews, God’s people, this verse refers to God’s judgment of all the nations who have adopted the same stand. And this judgment will occur most emphatically when Jesus returns.]

Zephaniah 1:7 Be silent before the Lord GOD! For the day of the LORD is near, for the LORD has prepared a sacrifice, he has consecrated His guests. [This specific reference may be to the destruction of the southern Kingdom of Judah by the Babylonians between 600-586 B.C.]

Zephaniah 1:14 Near is the great day of the LORD, near and coming very quickly; listen, the day of the LORD! In it the warrior cries out bitterly. [This reference to the Day of the Lord with the verses that follow sounds like the final judgment of the Jews at Jesus’ return.]

Malachi 4:5 “Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD. **6** “He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse.” [The restoring the hearts of the current Jews to the condition of the hearts of the fathers of the Jews, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob must be referring the millennial kingdom of Revelation 20. Therefore, this day of the Lord is the final judgment of the Jews by God at the time of Jesus’ return.]

With all the possible variants, it makes the most sense that Peter is simply saying that the whole creation is going to disappear when God destroys it with fire at the Day of the Lord. However, Peter is referring to the very end of the “Day of the Lord,” because we know from other passages, including Revelation, that it will involve Jesus’ setting up his earthly kingdom in Jerusalem for a period of time called the millenium, and it will also involve the Jews’ living on the land of Israel and Gentile’s living in their countries during the millenium. Thus, Peter’s emphasis is to point to the final destruction of unbelievers at the end of the present realm in order to help the Christians to whom he is writing grab onto the promise from God of their salvation as seen in 3:11 ff.

The Day of the Lord appearing like a thief and referring to Jesus' return is something that Paul also says in [1 Thessalonians 5:2](#) For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. [3](#) While they are saying, "Peace and safety!" then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape.

So it could be possible that Peter is referring to the end of the Millennial Kingdom when subjectively the unbelieving Gentiles will be totally surprised when God destroys them and the current cosmos. But why would he skip over the entire millennial kingdom, especially after referring to Jesus' return and parousia in 3:4? Because he desires to describe briefly the summation and finality of God's judgment of mankind for the purpose of motivating his readers to endure in their faith and obedience to God.

The "works in it," i.e., in the earth, refer to all that God is producing within the context of the present earth as a result of the story that He formulated in eternity past. All of this will disappear, never to be seen again. And the inference is that, anybody who is not willing to get on board with the temporary nature of this supposed eternal and atheistic cosmos will be confronted with God's judgment, wrath, and destruction.

As quoted above, cf. [Joel 2:28](#) "It will come about after this that I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind [flesh, i.e., Jews during the Millennial Kingdom]; and your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. [29](#) Even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days. [30](#) I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth, blood, fire and columns of smoke. [31](#) The sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes.

⁵⁴ Τούτων 'οὕτως πάντων' λουμένων ποταπούς δεῖ ὑπάρχειν [ῥύμας] ἐν ἀγίαις ἀναστροφαῖς καὶ εὐσεβείαις –
ῥύμας ὑπαρχεῖν 642 ὑπαρχεῖν ἡμας 8* 5 ὑπαρχεῖν ῥ * ^{72, 74vid} B 1175 vg ^{ms} ; παρεχεῖν εαυτούς 1243

As above, there is the strong possibility that Peter is referring to "us" and not just "you," thereby including himself and the apostles in the thought that all people, including all Jewish people, need to behave in a particular way if they desire to be saved from God's destructive actions at the end of the present realm. To read "us" (ἡμας) makes more sense in the light of his speaking about "us" in 3:9.

⁵⁵ προσδοκῶντας 'καὶ σπεύδοντας' τὴν παρουσίαν τῆς τοῦ Ἱεροῦ ἡμέρας δι' ἣν οὐρανοὶ πυρούμενοι λυθήσονται καὶ στοιχεῖα καυσούμενα ῥτήκεται – In the light of ἡμας making more sense in the previous verse, translating the nominative plural accusative participles with "we" instead of "you" is better. As a result, Peter is saying that both the apostles and their believing listeners are both waiting for (προσδοκῶντας) and hastening (σπεύδοντας) the event called the Day of Lord, which will spell the end of the present realm when God uses fire to destroy it.

So Peter asks the question as to what kind of people believers should be in the middle of demonstrating their respect for God in their lives.

We could consider also [Zephaniah 3:8](#) "Therefore wait for Me," declares the LORD, "For the day when I rise up as a witness. Indeed, My decision is to gather nations, to assemble kingdoms, to pour out on them My indignation, all My burning anger; for all the earth will be devoured by the fire of My zeal. [9](#) For then I will give to the peoples purified lips, that all of them may call on the name of the LORD, to serve Him shoulder to shoulder. [10](#) From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia My worshipers, My dispersed ones, will bring My offerings. [11](#) In that day you will feel no shame because of all your deeds by which you have rebelled against Me; for then I will remove from your midst your proud, exulting ones, and you will never again be haughty on My holy mountain. [12](#) But I will leave among you a humble and lowly people, and they will take refuge in the name of the LORD. [13](#) The remnant of Israel will do no wrong and tell no lies, nor will a deceitful tongue be found in their mouths; for they will feed and lie down with no one to make them tremble."

But Zephaniah is more likely talking about the judgment of Gentiles when Jesus returns with the subsequent conversion of all the Jews and their being restored to the land of Israel for the millennial kingdom.

⁵⁶ καινός δὲ οὐρανός καὶ ῥγὴν καινὴν κατὰ τὸ ἐπάγγελμα' αὐτοῦ προσδοκῶμεν, ἐν οἷς δικαιοσύνη κατοικεῖ – Assuming that Peter in this passage is referring to all the judgment that God will bring about on the world and the Jews and to the complete destruction of this realm in the end, here he speaks of a whole new reality which God will create. It will be characterized not by immorality, moral rebellion, and death as this one has been, but by moral perfection and life—eternal life. It is this future realm for which Peter and all other fellow believers are waiting confidently and expectantly, implying that they are not counting on the present realm to bring total fulfillment, satisfaction, and pleasure.

In addition, the new morally perfect reality is part of God's promise, just as much as the return of the Messiah is. God made this initial promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3. He called it His blessing which He would give Abraham as that for which he qualified by being a man of genuine belief and obedience even as a sinner.

There is this passage in [Is. 65:17](#) "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth (בְּרֵאשִׁית יְשׁוּעָה וְיָרֵךְ יְהוָה) (ἔσται γὰρ ὁ οὐρανὸς καινὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ καινὴ), and the former things will not be remembered or come to mind." However, God is referring to the Millennial Kingdom and not to a completely new creation, because he goes on to say, [Isaiah 65:18](#) "But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem for rejoicing and her people for gladness. [19](#) "I will also rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in My people; and there will no longer be heard in her the voice of weeping and the sound of crying. [20](#) "No longer will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his days; for the youth will die at the age of one hundred and the one who

does not reach the age of one hundred will be thought accursed. 21 “They will build houses and inhabit them; they will also plant vineyards and eat their fruit. 22 “They will not build and another inhabit, they will not plant and another eat; for as the lifetime of a tree, so will be the days of My people, and My chosen ones will wear out the work of their hands. 23 “They will not labor in vain, or bear children for calamity; for they are the offspring of those blessed by the LORD, and their descendants with them.” The rest of this passage shows that God is speaking of people who die and who bear children, which will not happen in the realm of the new heaven and new earth of Revelation 21. Therefore, God is speaking of new order of universe when Satan is bound and Jesus rules the entire world with a “rod of iron” (cf. Psalm 2; Revelation 19:15).

⁵⁷ Διό, ἀγαπητοί, ταῦτα προσδοκῶντες σπουδάσατε ἄσπιλοι καὶ ἀμόμητοι αὐτῷ εὐρεθῆναι ἐν εἰρήνῃ – Now, Peter answers the question that he asked in vs. 11 & 12. The apostles and fellow believers should be people of the future, expecting eternal shalom of the eternal Kingdom of God, which means that they should pursue moral goodness with authentic belief. This is what Peter means by “spotless and without blemish” (ἄσπιλοι καὶ ἀμόμητοι), where the second word is an OT term that refers to the “perfection” of the animal being sacrificed by a Jew and to the Jew who has biblical inwardness as demonstrated by his willingness to adhere to the ceremonial and sacrificial commandments of the Mosaic Covenant. For example, there are the following passages —

Exodus 29:1 “Now this is what you shall do to them to consecrate them to minister as priests to Me—take one young bull and two rams without blemish (בְּרִיָּאִים) (ἀμόμους)... [The animals are not “perfect” in the sense that there is absolutely nothing about them that could be considered a flaw, but they certainly appear good and healthy, thus reflecting the Jew’s willingness to present to God the best of what is available.]

Psalm 19:13 Also keep back Your servant from presumptuous sins (בְּרִיָּאִים) (ἀπὸ ἀλλοτριῶν). Let them not rule over me. Then I will be blameless (בְּרִיָּאִים from בְּרִיָּאִים) (ἄμωμος), and I shall be acquitted of great transgression. [David in Psalm 19 cannot be saying that he is morally perfect. Indeed, in this one verse he admits that he is guilty of great immorality. Therefore, his blamelessness is his willingness to be humble and repentant before God in order to gain His mercy.]

As a result, this exhortation by Peter is like Paul’s in 1 Thessalonians 5:19, “Do not cause the Spirit to stop functioning.” Even in the light of God’s being the transcendent storyteller who is bringing about human history exactly as He has planned it, Peter (and Paul) would have his (their) readers make every human effort to choose to do that which is right according to the apostolic message. This is what kind of people they should be as they wait for the Day of the Lord which will contain Jesus’ return and the eventual destruction of the present realm.

⁵⁸ καὶ τὴν τοῦ κυρίου ῥῆμῶν μακροθυμίαν σωτηρίαν ἠγείσθε, καθὼς καὶ ὁ ἀγαπητὸς ἡμῶν ἀδελφὸς Παῦλος κατὰ τὴν δοθεῖσαν αὐτῷ σοφίαν ἐγράψεν ὑμῖν – There is one word that defines and describes the “delay” of God and the “patience of God” in bringing about the end of the world—salvation (σωτηρίαν)! Everything that has been occurring since Peter’s day and will occur until the present realm ends when God destroys it with fire is for the purpose of His rescuing those whom He has chosen and designated for eternal salvation. This includes not only changing people inwardly, so that they spiritually transition from being abject rebels against God to committed believers in the Messiah, but also keeping them changed inwardly and committed to receiving the promise of eternal salvation.

Peter refers to a letter that the apostle Paul wrote to these same people and in which he focused on the subject of salvation—as we would expect him to do (cf. Romans-Titus, and Hebrews also). If the recipients of Peter’s letter are Jews, then it certainly makes sense that Paul’s letter to them was the one we call Hebrews. But this would be only if we actually have the letter of Paul to which Peter is referring.

⁵⁹ ὡς καὶ ἐν πάσαις ἑπιστολαῖς λαλῶν ἐν αὐταῖς περὶ τούτων, ἐν ᾧ ἐστὶν δυσνόητά τινα, ἃ οἱ ἀμαθεῖς καὶ ἀστήρικτοι στρεβλοῦσιν ὡς καὶ τὰς λοιπὰς γραφὰς πρὸς τὴν ἰδίαν αὐτῶν ἀπώλειαν – Peter refers to people who are distorting the “rest of the writings” (τὰς λοιπὰς γραφὰς), i.e., the OT. This could just as easily be Gentiles, who explicitly reject the Bible as God’s revelation to humanity, or it could be Jews, who misunderstand especially the Mosaic Covenant and thus miss the importance of Jesus as the suffering Messiah. The consequence of rejecting and/or distorting/misunderstanding intentionally the Bible is eternal destruction. This is what Peter has been writing so forcefully about avoiding for his readers. Peter is also saying that these same misguided people have read Paul’s letters, but they willingly distort them, too. And this occurs because these people are “unlearned” (οἱ ἀμαθεῖς) and “unstable” (ἀστήρικτοι). The first word seems to refer to their unwillingness to do all the work that is necessary to grasp the biblical message. So while they read and interpret the Bible and Paul’s letters, they fail to understand correctly what these documents are really saying. We get our words asteroid and steroids from the second word, which refers to these people’s unwillingness to remain committed to truth. They are not strong in their commitment to the truth. Something else gets in the way of their staying grounded in their desire to learn about God, and they basically end up making things up about Him based upon their poor understanding of the biblical documents.

If Peter is saying in that culture and as a contemporary of Paul that his letters are hard to understand, especially Hebrews, then where does this leave us in the 21st century in a completely different culture and speaking a completely different language? Obviously, it puts us in a very precarious position, requiring that we be just that much more careful and humble in our study of the Bible as well as gracious and loving towards other Christians who disagree with our interpretations of passages.

⁶⁰ Ὑμεῖς οὖν, ἀγαπητοί, προγινώσκοντες φυλάσσεσθε, ἵνα μὴ τῆ τῶν ἀθέσμων πλάνη συναπαχθέντες ἐκπέσητε τοῦ ἰδίου στήριγμοῦ – The world will always contain people who reject truth and embrace error and who strongly recommend that everyone else do the same. Peter is exhorting his readers not to fall under the spell of such rebels against God, knowing ahead of time that their presence and intent will come along and contaminate cultures and societies in a demonstrative way. In order to avoid being influenced by such people, it will require a “firmness of commitment” (στήριγμοῦ) on the part of the recipients of this letter. Notice that στήριγμοῦ is from the same root as “unstable” (ἀστήρικτοι) in the previous verse. There are those who are the latter, uncommitted to truth, and there are those who are committed to the truth. Peter is encouraging his readers to remain committed.

The way that Peter is expressing these ideas, he must mean that retaining a “firmness of commitment” will not be easy. The strong influence of a Christian’s own moral depravity and the attractiveness of clever unbelievers’ ideas and propaganda will result in an authentic, human struggle within Christians to stay the course in their undivided belief in the apostolic message of Jesus as the Messiah.

As with “unstable” in the previous verse, we get our word steroids from this term. An inwardness on steroids is the willfull choice on people’s part to remain fully committed not only to truth, but also to obtaining God’s eternal mercy through the advocacy of Jesus as high priest and Messiah. And, of course, only God’s grace can cause this to be the case for any sinful human being.

⁶¹ ἀυξάνετε δὲ ἐν χάριτι καὶ γνῶσει τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν καὶ σωτῆρος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ὅτι αὐτῷ ἡ δόξα ‘καὶ νῦν καὶ εἰς ἡμέραν αἰῶνος’. Ὁ[ἀμὴν.] – It is the concept of God’s grace that gets distorted the most by “unprincipled men” (τῶν ἀθέσμων), and the way to avoid such distortion is to continue learning the biblical message that centers on the existence and the purpose for the Messiah. Staying close to this truth by diligently, carefully, and consistently studying the apostolic documents along with those to which they refer, the OT, will allow a person to avoid the disaster of God’s wrath, judgment, and resultant eternal destruction.

It is Jesus who is experiencing the greatest glory now as the crucified, risen from the dead, and ascended Messiah and who will experience when beginning with his return and establishing the eternal Kingdom of God.