

Sunday March 27th 2011
The Second of Peter
Part Sixteen

1). 2Pe 3:13 *Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. 14 Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless; 15 and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation--as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, 16 as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.*

a). In the verses leading up to v13 the Holy Spirit through Peter has drawn our attention in past weeks to the destruction of the heavens and earth ‘which are now’ at the conclusion of the Millennial Kingdom and then here in v13 He reminds us that we are looking for a new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

b). And we will remember that this is not something that we look for with wishful thinking, but rather something that we look for ‘according to His promise’.

c). Re 21:1 ¶ *Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. 2 Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. 4 "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." 5 Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful." 6 And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End.*

d). And so because the present heavens and earth are in the process of dissolution and because the Lord has promised a new heavens and a new earth we are to be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless.

e). Not only this though but we are also to consider that the long suffering of the Lord is salvation - 2Pe 3:9 ¶ *The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.*

f). The foundational pattern then of 6 days of work followed by a 7th day of rest, as it applies to the restoration of fallen Man - 2Pe 3:8 ¶ *But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.*

Is a pattern therefore set in place as a type of the process that leads to the salvation of the soul; the ‘so great a salvation’ of Hebrews Chapter 2.

g). Ge 1:3 ¶ *Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. 4 And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness. 5 God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day.*

h). The first day of the restoration when light comes into that which was previously only darkness is a picture, a type, of our eternal salvation, the salvation of our spirit, with the division between the light and the darkness picturing the division between our spirit and soul.

i). Now in the foundational pattern, after the first day, there are another 5 days following on from the first day which find their conclusion in a Man and a Woman at the end of the 6th day preparing to enter into the 7th Day in a marriage relationship to have dominion over the earth; therefore we must see that in the antitype of this foundational pattern there is a continuing work of the Spirit beyond our spirit salvation, represented through that seen in days 2 -6 in Genesis Chapter 1 which is to find its conclusion in the salvation of our soul at the end of the 6th day, after 6000 years, the event that will precede the Second Man, the Last Adam entering into the 7th Day with His Bride to have dominion over the earth – This process towards a point of conclusion is the very thing that Peter had referenced and we had studied in his first letter - 1Pe 1:7 *that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, 8 whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 receiving the end of your faith-- the salvation of your souls.*

2). The Holy Spirit through Peter reminds Peter’s readers of that which Paul had also written to them - *as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, 16 as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things,*

a). And we will remember from our study of 1 Peter that Peter’s readers would also have received the letters to the Ephesians and the Galatians and the fact that at the beginning of v16 Peter says, ‘as also in all his epistles,’ suggests that at the very least Peter, if not all those who received Peter’s letters, had knowledge of all Paul’s epistles.

b). And interestingly in all Paul's letters he speaks 'of these things' – the very same things that Peter is writing about [and the same things that Jude has written about] – faith with respect to the salvation of the soul and apostasy from that faith.

c). Scripture really couldn't be any clearer with regards to the content of Paul's letters, apart from reading the contents themselves, and we should read them therefore with the salvation of the soul in view – and this would especially apply to the Book of Romans which is so often viewed exclusively as a book dealing with spirit salvation alone. And this example of mishandling scripture in Romans leads us nicely to Peter's next comment about Paul's letters – *in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.*

d). To interpret the Book of Romans as a Book that teaches eternal salvation alone is to 'twist' the scriptures, and according to our scripture those who do so do it to their own destruction.

e). Twist = Greek – 'strebloo', *streb-lo'-o* = to wrench, i.e. (specially), to torture (by the rack), but only figuratively, to pervert:-- wrest.

f). Peter acknowledges that there are some things in Paul's epistles that are 'hard to understand', things that must be taught by the Spirit as He guides us into all truth. And these 'hard' truths the willfully ignorant and those without proper foundation 'twist' – 'as they do also the rest of scripture' giving rise to false teaching.

g). The willfully ignorant and the unstable would be a reference to the false teachers, the scoffers, who have stood away from the faith - 2Pe 2:1 ¶ *But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. 2 And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. 3 ¶ By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words;*

h). We should also note here that the Holy Spirit through Peter is making known that Paul's epistles, even in his lifetime, were to be considered as scripture.

3). 2Pe 3:17 *You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked;*

a). And so Peter's second letter having begun with the faith in respect of the salvation of the soul admonishing us to abundantly supply in our faith virtue, knowledge, self control etc, and then dealing with apostasy from that same faith draws to a close with a final admonishment to his readers, the first part of which we see here in v17.

b). Peter's readers 'know this beforehand' – they have prior knowledge of not only all that Peter has taught them concerning faith and apostasy but also that which they have received from Paul and in this sense they really have no excuses for not doing that which would lead to the end of their faith - the salvation of their soul.

c). And we would of course consider it to be a blessing for them to have this prior knowledge and it is without doubt that we would also need to consider ourselves to have this same blessing as we also 'know this beforehand' and even more so as we have the whole of scripture to inform us. And yet even as we consider the enormity of this blessing and the protection for us that it offers we might also remember Paul's words recorded in the Book of Acts – Ac 20:27 *"For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God. 28 "Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. 29 "For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 "Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. 31 "Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.*

d). Those in Ephesus had Paul teach them the whole counsel of God, he had warned the Ephesians and by extension all those 'in Asia' night and day with tears for 3 years so that they would 'know this beforehand' and yet when we see the Ephesian church in the Book of Revelation their knowing beforehand had not prevented them from choosing to go in a wrong direction - Re 2:1 ¶ *"To the angel of the church of Ephesus write,.....4 "Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. 5 "Remember therefore from where you have fallen;*

e). And as we look at that which happened in Ephesus it provides us with a dramatic picture of exactly that which Peter is writing about. The admonition to the Ephesians is to 'take heed to yourselves', and 'therefore watch' – and then the admonition we see given in Peter is 'beware'.

f). Beware = Greek – 'phulasso', *foo-las'-so* = to guard, a military term, hence 'be on your guard'.

g). And the reason we are to be on our guard is in case we also, like the false teachers and those who follow them are moved out of our projected path towards the Kingdom to our own destruction.

h). This would be the same thought that we have seen in -

1Co 10:12 *Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.*

i). And that which we may fall from as given in Peter is 'your own steadfastness'

j). Steadfastness = Greek – 'sterigmos, *stay-rig-mos*' from 'sterizo',

stay-rid'-zo = i.e. (literally) to turn resolutely in a certain direction,

k). A great example of being resolutely set in a certain direction would be found in the Lord as He moved inexorably towards His crucifixion –

Lu 9:51 ¶ *Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem,*

l). And so it should be for us, following Christ's example, that we have set our face steadfastly towards the Kingdom, the New Jerusalem, in full knowledge of the death of self that we must experience as we take up our cross daily in order to get there, in full knowledge that it is by the scriptures alone that our course is set and our path is illuminated, and yet we are warned that we can fall from this steadfastness by '*being led away with the error of the wicked;*'

m). The idea contained in the word translated 'being led away' is that of being 'carried away with' so as 'to experience with others the force of that which carries away'. And this is presented in the passive tense showing that this would be something we allow to happen to us; like a piece of flotsam caught up in a flood we could allow ourselves to be swept away.

n). Error = Greek – 'plane', *plan'-ay* = wandering, straying about – one led away from the right way roams here and there. [this is also in the instrumental case which means 'by the error' rather than 'with the error' would be a better translation].

o). A good example to help us understand what this would look like would be Barnabas when he played the hypocrite with Peter at Antioch – an event recorded in - Ga 2:11 ¶ *Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; 12 for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. 13 And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy.*

p). And here we see 'even Barnabas' being 'carried away' by the error of the wicked.

q). Now in the context of our scripture in Peter the 'error of the wicked' would have to be a reference to the false teachers and their erroneous doctrines and it is this false teaching promulgated by the false teachers that could carry us away.

r). And from the example of Barnabas we can clearly see how circumstance and emotional pressure can be the deciding factor in which path we choose to follow rather than the truth of scripture.

s). Paul of course, in our Antioch example, provides the counter to this withstanding Peter 'to his face, because he was to be blamed' and we would know, in this context, that this would not be the easiest thing to do, but nevertheless it was the right thing to do.

t). And so I would encourage us all today to stand by, stand for and uphold the truth of scripture and not to be carried away by error through emotional attachment, fear or circumstance remembering the admonition of –
Re 3:11 *"Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.*

u). And so to bring this back to the church in Ephesus and their 'leaving their first love' that which is recorded in Peter and the example we see in Barnabas would give us a good insight into the reasons why they would have turned away from the truth.

v). As we look at all of this though it may appear somewhat daunting as there seems to be almost an inevitability about it and for some people, those who do not have a proper foundation or those who are more concerned with emotional attachment than truth – if this never changes - being led away by error does become inevitable. But for those who have steadfastly set their face toward the New Jerusalem scripture describes and provides the means by which we will never be 'led away by the error of the wicked'.

4). And we will find this means in the second part of the final admonishment at the end of 2 Peter - 2Pe 3:18 *but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.*

a). Rather than being led away by error we are instead to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

b). The word translated 'grow' here takes us beyond being firmly planted to producing an increase – in this word is our 'growth' to spiritual maturity. It is therefore spiritual growth and the sphere of this growth is 'grace and knowledge'.

c). Now please note that the scripture does not say that we personally are to become more gracious, but rather that our growth takes place through the grace that Christ alone provides for us as we continue to know all that there is to know about Him.

d). And this final admonition takes us back to where the Book of 2 Peter began - 2Pe 1:1 ¶ *Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ: 2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, 3 as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, 4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. 5 ¶ But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, 6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, 7*

to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. 8 For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

e). And so we can see then that Peter's second letter begins by admonishing us to spiritual growth as a result of the multiplication of Christ's grace and knowledge concerning Him as we abundantly supply in our faith and then ends with the very same focus. And in between these two points we find the reason for the admonition, the chapters that deal with false teachers.

f). Now we might also remember that abundantly supplying in our faith as described in Peter provided the commentary to the exhortation that we found in the companion scripture in Jude - Jude 1:3 ¶ *Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.*

g). Our contending earnestly with respect to the faith in Jude would be the process described in abundantly supplying in our faith in 2 Peter.

h). And just as 2 Peter and Jude begin in parallel so they also end in parallel with the concluding verse of Jude connected to his opening statements with details concerning the false teachers separating to two - Jude 1:20 *But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, 21 keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.*

i). Here in Jude the words 'But you' provide the contrast between the 'beloved' and the false teachers who have been the subject of the previous verses.

j). And just as 'building yourselves up on your most holy faith' is the process to spiritual maturity that can be applied to Peter which affords us God's protection from being led away by the error of the wicked so it is also Jude's explanation of 'to contend earnestly for the faith' from Jude 1:3.

k). Building [yourselves] up = Greek – 'epoikodomeo', *ep-oy-kod-om-eh'-o* = to build upon – to finish the structure of which the foundation has already been laid.

l). The foundation that is laid is of course the Lord Jesus Christ, but specifically in our scripture here it is 'your most holy faith'. And this would clearly be a reference to Christ and His coming Kingdom rather than Christ and eternal salvation – and the way we are to build, that which brings about the completion of the structure we have already seen in 2 Peter 1:5-8 with additional commentary given to us in - 1Pe 2:5 *you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*

5). Now let's remember for a moment, as we noted last week, that the work of the false teachers is demonically inspired and is a part of the spiritual warfare in which we are all engaged - Mt 13:33 *Another parable He spoke to them: "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened."*

a). To be victorious in this warfare we must be properly equipped as described in - Eph 6:11 *Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.*

b). And within the armor of God that we are to put on there is one piece in particular that we are to take above all others - Eph 6:16 *above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.*

c). In order to take up the shield of faith we must be built up in the faith, we must abundantly supply in our faith, we must progress to spiritual maturity – Ro 10:17 *So then faith comes by [out of] hearing, and hearing by [through] the word of God.*

d). It is only in this way that we will access that protection that God affords us against the 'wiles of the devil' through the shield of faith which will 'quench all the fiery darts' – which in the case of 2 Peter and Jude is apostasy at the hands of the false teachers.

e). Perhaps as we think about all of this we will see even more urgently the need for us to contend earnestly with regards to the faith and to appreciate even more poignantly the forces ranged against us and what we must do to remain protected.

6). Now according to what we see in Jude 1:20 our growth to spiritual maturity is to be accompanied by 'praying in the Holy Spirit'; the same thing that we find at the conclusion of the section on spiritual warfare in Ephesians Chapter 6 – Eph 6:18 *praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit,*

a). So the obvious question to ask would be, 'what does it mean to pray in the Holy Spirit?'

b). Well the words 'in the Holy Spirit' are what are called 'locative of sphere', which simply means within the sphere of the Holy Spirit – thereby motivated and empowered by Him. This is prayer that is wholly within the spiritual realm, never from within the realm of the flesh and commentary on this is given to us in – Ro 8:26 ¶ *Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. 27 Now He who*

searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

c). Now this may be a redundant think to say but we cannot pray in the Holy Spirit without we are filled with Holy Spirit, and we will remember that we are only filled with the Spirit by allowing the word of Christ to dwell in us richly with all wisdom.

d). The phrase ‘praying in the Holy Spirit’ is what is called ‘instrumental of means’ which simply tells us, just as we have seen in Romans, that we pray by means of the Holy Spirit, in dependence upon Him and prayer such as this of necessity accompanies our growth to spiritual maturity. It must therefore encompass our study and our reception of the word as well as our preparation for receiving it.

e). What we may begin to see here then is that our prayer life may have a good deal more to do with faith, in our trusting God, than in the abundance of our words.

7). Jude also goes on to say - Jude 1:21 *keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.*

a). Keep = Greek – ‘tereo’, *tay-reh'-o* = to attend to carefully

b). So we are to attend to carefully in order to keep ourselves in the sphere of the love of God.

c). Now in Romans Chapter 8 it says - Ro 8:38 *For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, 39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

d). If nothing can separate us from the love of God, then wouldn't it mean that we continually remain in that sphere regardless of ourselves? So how should we understand Jude 1:21?

e). Well perhaps we should understand it in relation to what we find in – 1Jo 2:5 *But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him.*

1Jo 5:3 *For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome. 4 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith. 5 Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?*

f). Keeping ourselves in the sphere of the love of God would then mean keeping ourselves in the sphere of His oversight and protection through our faith as we grow to maturity realizing that this is His work in us through the Spirit – Jude 1:24 *Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, 25 To God our*

Savior, Who alone is wise, Be glory and majesty, Dominion and power, Both now and forever. Amen.

g). And as we participate in this we must be *looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life* – looking forward to that time when God’s mercy will extend to us resulting in life in the age to come. That which we see here in Jude is the same thought that we have already seen in Peter –

1Pe 1:13 ¶ *Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;*

h). And so, as look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ in that Day, knowing this beforehand, we come to the conclusion of our study of 1 + 2 Peter and we thank the Lord for His goodness, His grace and His mercy.