



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

2 Peter 3: 10-18

Lesson 9

Spring 2020

"Ashes To Glory"

TRANSCRIPT

Thank you, Seth. And good morning to all of you, and happy Father's Day as well. It's great to have some of you here and hopefully we'll be able to continue to increase the number, and that everybody'd be safe, and this thing will be behind us. But I think our passage reminds us, at least it should, that the Lord God is in control of everything, and He has a plan. And that's what we will consider this morning as we finish our series in 2 Peter. Our text is 2 Peter, chapter 3. We're going to look at verses 10 through 18. So follow along with me as I read,

"But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up." *(Now I take this as a 'refining fire'. I'll mention that, I think in the message, but that the kingdom that precedes this will be transformed. Not destroyed but transformed; that that which is temporal will be done away with, and that which is permanent will be transformed and glorified. There's a difference, (I will say this also), about this particular text among premillennialists. When this is taking place, some, and some very good people, understand this to be when the Lord returns at the second coming. This is how He will transform the earth, and it will be regenerated, as the Lord says in the Book of Matthew. You read some of the descriptions of the event and fire is*

associated with the Lord's coming. And so that's, by some, thought to be when this takes place. So this is a description of the Millennial Kingdom.

I'm not taking it that way. I recognize there's reason to believe that from the Book of Isaiah and other things, but I'm following the chronology of the Book of Revelation and see this as after the events of Revelation 20. But we'll consider that a little bit as we continue our study.) Verse 11,

"Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which (*that is, because of this day*) the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless, and regard the patience of our Lord *as* salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, as also in all *his* letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as *they do* also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction. You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness, but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him *be* glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen."

2 Peter 3: 10-18

May the Lord bless this reading of His word, bless our time together, and guide us in our thinking as we go through this great text of Scripture. Let's pray. Let's ask for His blessing on us.

Father, we do that; we ask that You would bless us, that You would guide us in our thinking, bless us spiritually. These are interesting things we consider. Peter could have written much more about this; we would have liked that. But he wrote what we

needed to know, and we know enough to know that this present order of things is not going to last. However we understand the details of the future, what we know is this present world in its fallen condition is not going to be the condition forever. And that we need to live in light of that is really his point.

The study of future things, the study of eschatology, is very interesting. It should be. It's fascinating, but You didn't give it to us, Lord, to entertain us. You gave it to us to give us hope and encourage right behavior, and Peter certainly lays great stress on that. So may we live in light of the things that we have read, and what we will study. And may You encourage us to live obedient, godly lives, to be lights in the midst of a very dark world and confused age. We look to You to bless us. Make us wise people, godly people, that serve You above all things. So may this passage have its good results in our lives. Bless us. Guide us in our thinking, as I said, and help us to reflect deeply on these things.

And then, Lord, as we come to the Lords' Supper at the end of our service, may You bless us richly as we reflect upon the person and work of Your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ until He comes again.

Lord, bless us materially and physically, for we are living in strange times. We say that, and yet our days are in Your hand, and we are comforted by that fact. But those who are sick, dear saints Lord, protect them and bless them. And bless all who are gathered here, and all Your people throughout the metroplex and the state and whoever is watching this service. We pray Your rich blessings upon them and our nation.

Give our leaders great wisdom as they continue to give direction. And may the citizens, all of us, be wise in what we do. And I pray that in Your providence, this would become something that is just history to us, and we can progress beyond it. But until then, Lord, bless those of us who know Your Son and make us good and faithful witnesses for You; wise individuals in the midst of this day in which we live.

We thank you for this day. It's Father's Day; bless the fathers that are here. May they have an enjoyable time with their families today, and may we have a rich time of study and fellowship right now. We commit it to You, and we thank You for all that we have in Christ. And it's in His name we pray. Amen.

TS Eliot wrote in his poem, *The Hollow Men*, "This is the way the world ends. Not with a bang, but a whimper." We read that in high school, and that line stuck with me; "Not with a bang but a whimper." Scientists agree. Since discovering that the universe is expanding at an accelerating rate; and galaxies will only fly farther apart; distances will increase; space will grow emptier; old stars will burn out; and the universe will fade to night. —Not too inspiring. It's like the Vikings eschatology, in Norse myths, in which the Frost Giants win, the sun goes dark, and the universe ends in eternal winter. Well all of that is profoundly pessimistic, but the human mind, unaided by revelation, always leads to despair.

The Word of God, on the other hand, gives hope. It's, for the believer, a certain hope. The cosmos, the world and the universe will end. —True. It will burn up, but it's a refining fire. And from the ashes, a new world will come. And that's no myth. That's the future. It's revealed by Peter here in 2 Peter, chapter 3. And it has an important application for us; prophecy always does. It is intended to give us hope, and it's for the purpose of producing morality—proper behavior—never for entertainment or curiosity, as I had said just a little while ago.

Eschatology, the study of the last things, has been the subject of all of chapter 3—the second coming and now the end of the world. Peter has explained why the Lord's return has not occurred. It's not a delay—it's all according to God's plan. "He is patient toward you", Peter said, "toward His people, and presently gathering His elect for salvation." But this period of waiting for us and gathering for Him will not go on indefinitely. The end will certainly come and when it does, there will be great changes.

That's what Peter describes in verses 10 through 18 of chapter 3, destruction and creation, or refinement and transformation. It will happen unexpectedly, and catastrophically. That's what he says in verse 10, "But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up."

"The day of the Lord" is a day of doom; it's a day of judgment on God's enemies when His name will be vindicated. We read of it all through the Old Testament; In Isaiah chapter 2, verse 12 for example, we read of "a day of reckoning". In 13, verse 6, Isaiah writes, "Wail, for the day of the LORD is near! It will come as destruction from the Almighty." Paul spoke of it in 1 Thessalonians, chapter 5, verse 2, and then in 2 Thessalonians, chapter 2, verse 2.

"The day of the Lord" is not a 24-hour day, it's a long period of time. —It's an age, and the Book of Revelation puts it in the tribulation and, it seems, through the Millennial Kingdom. In Revelation, chapter 6, in verse 17, John calls it "...the great day of their wrath." And the wrath he speaks of is of God on the throne and His Lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ. The event Peter is describing is the end of that time period. He doesn't reveal when this "day of the Lord" will occur, when it will happen; he didn't know.

And no one knows. In Matthew 24, verse 36, the Lord says that "no one knows the day and the hour" —no one knows when it will occur. Jesus said, "It will come like a thief, unexpectedly." So, "we are to be ready", that's His exhortation in Matthew 24, verse 44.

Peter gives the same description and exhortation here. When it occurs the universe will be destroyed. It will melt with a great "heat" and disappear with a great "roar". That's indicated in the very sound of the word that Peter uses here. In the Greek text it's the word *rhoizedon*. And you can kind of hear that sense of it in the word itself. No whimper or bang, it's a "roar" with which things will end. The heavens, the stars and galaxies will be snuffed out. The earth and the elements, the atoms that make everything up, "will be burned up." It will all disappear. Think of that—the earth and all its glories: Its architecture, its art, its literature, the wealth of nations, the natural beauties, the mountains and oceans—all of that will be destroyed. The world will end in flames.

In verse 12, Peter says that, "the elements will melt with intense heat." Literally, the "elements will be made liquid." You wonder if Peter wasn't unknowingly describing nuclear fission, in which the energy bound up in all of the atoms will be released in this

roaring explosion across the cosmos. His description certainly fits with our understanding of thermonuclear reaction. The word “destroyed” is literally “loosed”, or “break up”, or “broken up.” And that fits, it seems, the splitting of the atom. But I'm speculating on these things. The world, though, as we know it, and its history will end in a kind of universal holocaust. And this fiery termination, this fiery end measures the real value of our present age. —Nothing is going to last.

There are moral implications to that, there always are in the New Testament, and in the ..., well, in the Bible. There are moral implications to all of the doctrines and all of the things that are taught. And certainly that's true in this case. And Peter makes the application in the next verses. That's really the emphasis, I think, of this passage.

“How are you going to live in light of all these facts that I have just set before you”, he's saying? Verse 11, "Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness?" What are you building for? Where are you laying up your treasures? The Lord talked about that in the Sermon on the Mount, in Matthew 6:19. "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth." They don't last. Moths eat them. Rust destroys them. Thieves take them. You can't preserve them.

There are lots of illustrations of that, and lots of monuments to the truth of that. And so things that occur to me are some things that I've seen over the years of my life. I think of some of the ancient ruins that I've visited. Delphi in Greece, for example, is a beautiful place. It's the site that the Greeks chose as their sacred place, and they built temples there. And the cities of Greece had what they call treasuries there—buildings where they put their treasures. And so one of them that still stands there is the “Treasury of Athens”, which is a wealthy city: But it's empty. Not one coin or one pearl is left in it.

You can go into the ancient tombs of Egypt. You can visit the Pyramids and you can go up into them and go into the burial chambers, which were filled with the treasures of the pharaohs at one time. You can visit their graves in the Valley of the Kings, and they're all empty. Now one of them has some treasures in it, that of

Tutankhamen, but that's the only one that they found with the treasures. But you know what? King Tut doesn't enjoy any of those things. So if they're not taken away, you're taken away from them. Worldly investments don't last.

And ultimately this world won't last. We all know that. No one doubts that. But the reality is we don't always live like that. We live like this life is just going to roll on forever. Since it won't, since our life won't, and since this world won't, since it will all melt, since the glories and stories of this world are going to be destroyed—don't store up your treasures here. That's a word of the wise to the wise. This world is going to burn up; that's the instruction in this text, and it's something that we need to bear in mind. It's a truly awesome picture, even a little unsettling as we read this. Maybe even a little frightening. But we're not to be worried about it. We're not to be afraid at all. We're to be the opposite. That's what he's giving here; this is something for us to be encouraged of; for something better is coming, and we're to live for that.

There's a positive side to this, in other words, and that's the instruction that Peter gives in verse 12, "...looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which", (*that is because of this day*), "the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!" And it repeats the point to make the point very clear to us, this world is not going to last—and so don't live for this world, live for the next. It says "looking for" this coming and these events.

That doesn't mean we're to spend our time looking idly up into the sky. That's what the disciples did when the Lord ascended from the Mount of Olives. Do you remember that? Luke wrote of it at the beginning of Acts, in Acts, chapter 1, verse 11, the Lord goes up and they see Him ascend until He's taken up into a cloud. And they're standing there still looking, (which I think if I'd been there, I'd be doing the same thing—just staring up into the sky.) And they did it until the angels who were there told them to stop doing that, quit looking up into the sky. They said, "He's coming back in the same way that He left." In other words He's coming back physically, on the clouds to the earth. In the meantime they were to 'get to work'. They were to be active. And they got

active; they went back to Jerusalem, and they started doing the work of the Lord. That's the Book of Acts.

So Peter is not telling us to do what he was told not to do. He means be "hoping for" and anticipating the Lord's return and living in light of it. We're to be "hastening" it. That strengthens the idea of "looking for" it. And it doesn't mean that we can, in some way, in the things that we do, speed up the schedule of the Lord—influence His plan in some way. But we can work in concert with God's will to carry out His plan. And that's what we are to be doing.

In that sense, we have a part in the Lord's return, and the concluding events of history. In Acts, chapter 3, in verse 20, Peter calls people to repentance so that, as he says, "...that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord." Presently God is bringing His people to repentance. When that work is done, the Lord will come.

That work is done, though, largely through evangelism, in that we help this day draw near—we are part of that plan in bringing it to pass. So we are to do that. We're to be engaged in that, and we're to be engaged in prayer. We're to be praying about it. We're instructed to do that. The Lord instructed us to do that in what we call the Lord's Prayer, in Matthew, chapter 6, in verse 10, pray for His return. "Thy kingdom come." We're to be looking for it and praying for it.

Paul did that. He did that at the end of 1 Corinthians 16:22. "Maranatha", he says, which means, "Oh Lord, come!" John prays, at the end of the Book of Revelation 22:20, "Come, Lord Jesus." This is to be a burning desire that we have, yet so easy to get caught up in the things around us and not think in those terms. But that's the apostolic way of looking at life— "Come, Lord Jesus!"

So we have our part to play in that, and certainly we are to be longing for it and living in light of it, because as Peter again says, "The elements will melt with intense heat!" But the universe will not be left a burned-out cinder. This fire, as I've said, is a refining fire. It is a means of forging or transforming this present universe—this old universe—into a new universe; one reclaimed from the ashes of judgment; purged free of all sin and its effects. That's our hope. Paradise regained.

Which was promised by the Old Testament prophets. In Isaiah 65, verse 17, God said, "Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former things will not be remembered or come to mind." This is all going to be a "forgotten dream", as it were. And here in verse 13, Peter repeats that. He says, "We are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells." This is not a description full of description. About all he tells us about it is, "it will be new"; which is something. And he says it's a place "in which righteousness dwells" —and that tells us a great deal right there.

But the main thing he says here is it will be *new*. And the idea is not "new" just in terms of time or chronology, but also in character. It will be "fresh" —That's the idea. It will be unused; new in respect to its form, so that the new heavens and new earth will be completely different from what we know. It will be unlike this old universe. And just in that word "new", there is a kind of compelling description. And what I mean by that, it sort of "excites" the imagination. It's a significant description, but still one that lacks detail. And yet, you think about it, that's consistent with the way the prophets and apostles described things.

Paul tells us about the resurrection body, in 1 Corinthians 15. He says it will be a "heavenly body", that it will be "imperishable." He calls it "spiritual." All of this is in 1 Corinthians 15, verses 40 through 44. Now that tells us a lot, but it doesn't reveal an image to us. We can't say, "Oh, now I see what it's going to look like, what we're going to be like, what our form will be." But it doesn't tell us that because such things are really beyond our comprehension. I think that's how we're to understand that, and this, the resurrection body, the new heavens and the new earth, all of this is so great that it's beyond our ability to comprehend. It's beyond words. So the brevity of description is really an encouraging thing. What it's saying is, "You can't begin to conceive of how great and beautiful and magnificent this is. It's beyond our experience. There's really no analogy to be made."

That shouldn't surprise us. We can barely comprehend the present universe. We're always on the verge of discovering something new and contradictory. And a "resurrected universe", well that's well beyond us. It will be, as I said, as Peter says here,

"a place of righteousness." And that means it will be a place where we will be truly free. We will have none of the encumbrances and burdens of sin and guilt and the difficulty that we have in this world. We will be free of that. We will have true, unlimited joy. That's our future and that's our hope.

And the fact, as I consider this and contemplate it, I think the joy, (and this is probably well short of the reality), will only increase, without any interruption, exponentially throughout all eternity. Our knowledge, our joy, our love, all of these things will only increase without end, without limit. That being the case, that's what we should live for and invest in, the glorious world that's coming, a world of righteousness and freedom and real joy and happiness.

That's what Peter urges us to do in the rest of the chapter. In verse 14 he tells us how we should live and, in light of the Lord's coming, "...be diligent to be found by Him, *(to be found by Him when He comes)* ...in peace, spotless and blameless." In other words, our character and conduct should be the opposite of that of the false teachers. This is the reason he wrote this letter in the first place, because of these false teachers. And you'll remember, back in chapter 2, in verse 13, he described them as being "stains and blemishes." What will Christ find in us when He returns? That's a sobering question. Because everyone is going to be found by Him when He returns, no one can hide.

"The day of the Lord" is a period of time. It will come as a thief in the night, and it will begin with the Lord's return, with the rapture of the church which will be unexpected. So what Peter is saying is, "we are to be ready, always." As Peter says here, "Since you look for these things, be diligent." Christ's return is a strong incentive for godly living. All of this, the end of that age, that period, is an incentive for godly living. It should be. That's why it is important to believe it, to look for it, and live expectantly of it.

False teachers had ridiculed all of this. They ridiculed the idea of the Lord's return, and certainly the kingdom and the new heavens and the new earth. "That's all ridiculous.", they said, "Everything is going to continue on as it always has. Look, things

just don't change", they said. "There's no judgment to come. Forget the prophets. Look at this world. It just doesn't change."

And so in verse 15, Peter reiterates that what may appear to be a delay by God is really His patience. This is what he spoke about earlier, but here he repeats it. He's provided a lot of time, the Lord God has, for His plan of salvation to be carried out. And it is presently being carried out in the calling out of this world His people. God is like the father in the parable of the prodigal son. In fact, that parable is really about the father, in Luke, chapter 15. The son left the family for a life of pleasure, in which he squandered his wealth and his energy. But the father was patient with him. He didn't give up on his son. And one day the son returned, beaten and repentant, and the father received him back immediately with joy.

Now what kind of story would that have been if the father had lacked patience and love? Well, it's a story we never would have heard. It's a parable that would have never occurred in the Bible. As it is, it is a parable about God the Father, and His love for His elect. He is patient toward us. He's full of love and mercy. So in this period of patience we are to be active in the work of the Lord in preaching the gospel, teaching the gospel; living the gospel; and being a witness in the midst of this age. The work of bringing Christ to the lost.

Peter is not the only one who taught that, and he brings in the support of Paul at this point. He writes, "Just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you." It's not clear what text Peter means here. Maybe Romans, chapter 2, verse 4, where Paul writes of the riches of God's kindness and patience that leads to repentance and rescue from the judgment to come. All through Paul's writings, he spoke of eschatological events and the need to live in light of them. He calls the Lord's return "the blessed hope" in Titus, chapter 2, in verse 13.

But what's also interesting in this reference to Paul is that it shows that Peter and Paul kept in touch with one another over the years. They followed one another's ministries. You might think, "Well, they're apostles. They would do that." But you also should remember that years earlier in Antioch, Paul rebuked Peter to his face. And Peter

needed it: He had wrongly refused to eat with the Gentile converts there in Antioch when Jews from Jerusalem arrived. Paul refers to that in Galatians, chapter 2, verses 11 through 21. What this reference indicates is that that incident didn't cause a breach in their relationship. Rather, it speaks of the great maturity of Peter. He responded well to the rebuke that Paul gave to him, and here in our text he calls him our "beloved brother Paul." And I think he understood that in the fullest sense, because a loving brother rebukes another when he or a sister needs it.

Now here he indicates that Paul's writings were widespread and inspired. They were written according to the wisdom given to him. In other words, not according to Paul's own wisdom, but according to God's wisdom. The things that Paul wrote weren't simply Paul's thoughts and ideas. He was given wisdom, and Paul wrote according to that wisdom that was given by God in His grace. So, Peter endorsed the divine origin of Paul's writing, and indicates that the church did also. They were widely known in Asia Minor and that's why Peter appeals to Paul's authority.

What's also interesting about Peter's statement here, regarding Paul's letters, is what he says in verse 16, where he confesses that there "are some things hard to understand." That doesn't mean that Paul wasn't clear. He means that his subjects are deep; they're complicated; they're not easy. And so that takes real effort to understand the things that Paul wrote. If we're not careful in studying the New Testament, in studying the writings of the apostle, we can misinterpret them.

So this is a very human touch, I think, which gives some encouragement to us. We would all agree if we're honest and we spend much time in study of the New Testament, in study of the epistles of the apostle Paul, that there are some things hard to understand in them, and maybe many things. And if an apostle admits that, we don't need to be ashamed to admit it as well.

But this also carries with it a warning. Some of Paul's statements are "distorted by the untaught and the unstable." They twist things. The word "distorted" also means torture. They torture things. Inquisitors do that. Inquisitors torture people to get them to say what they want to hear. And bad interpreters do that. They "torture" the Bible to

get it to say what they want it to say. They read their own ideas into the text, rather than let the text speak to them.

I read a biography recently on F. F. Bruce, who died in 1990 I believe it was, a great British scholar. Some of you, perhaps, enjoy his commentaries and books. A profound man, and he loved the Scriptures because "they spoke to him". And they should speak to us. We don't speak to them. Rather, we let them speak to us and guide us.

Well, false teachers don't do that, they torture the text. And Christians, good Christians, naïve, (though Christians), can do that. That's a sign of immaturity. It's not easy to study Scripture because it takes a lot of energy/brain power to do that. I don't mean you have to be a smart person to study Scripture, but if you're going to be a student, it takes time and discipline—and it's not easy; it takes effort.

And if we're not willing to put that kind of effort into study, then we'll end up with some odd ideas. Dr. Johnson used to recite a rhyme, or a verse, that he'd heard somewhere. "Marvelous things in the Bible we see, things that are put there by you and by me." Well, we're all guilty of that from time to time and we need to guard against that. But this is particularly true of false teachers: They twist Paul to support their heterodox teaching, their false, distorted teaching.

For example, we know from Romans, chapter 6, verse 1, that Paul dealt with this very thing. "What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?" That was the accusation that was made about Paul's teaching. And he answers, "May it never be!" God forbid. The greatness of grace is seen in light of the sin that's forgiven. Just like the greatness of a person's strength is seen in the greatness of the weight that he or she would lift.

In the previous verses, (see Romans 5, in verse 20b), Paul says, "... but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more." And what he meant by that is to see the greatness of grace in the greatness of the sin that it deals with. No sin is greater than the grace of God; and that's a marvelous thing. God's grace is greater than all our sin and

has dealt with it. But some people were saying, "Ah, see Paul, what you're saying leads to certain things."

Now it's not certain who Paul is referring to, who he's quoting in that passage. It may be the Antinomians; that is the people that are against the Law. —People who think there's nothing that controls our behavior and we can live like whatever we want. And so they seized upon Paul's idea of grace to have antinomian ideas and propagate them. However, I'm more inclined to think that what he's doing there is quoting the Jewish opponents to his teaching, and they're saying, "If that's true, Paul, then that leads to a life of sin, and we may as well go sin to the full, because then we'll only be increasing the greatness of grace. And that disproves everything you're saying, Paul, because that's not the way we're to live." Either way, what Paul was teaching about the grace of God was being "distorted" and being used improperly. And not only that, Peter says they do this kind of thing with all of Scripture, "the rest of Scripture", which shows how extensive their distortion of the Bible was, these false teachers.

But what is especially significant about Peter's statement is by saying that "they distorted Paul's writings and the rest of Scripture", Peter put Paul's writings in the same category as all of Scripture. He's saying, "The rest of the Scriptures" means Paul's writings are Scripture as well. And this shows with certainty, what I said earlier, that Peter considered Paul's epistles to be inspired Scripture.

That gives us an idea, I think, of how the Canon of Scripture, the 66 books of the Bible were compiled in the early church. The Old Testament was already compiled, but the New Testament was put together in much this way. The apostle Peter gave approval of all of Paul's writings, and he was understood to be an apostle anyway. And so people understood that these writings from an apostle were Scripture, and they put them together. (There's more to it than that, of course, but this is part of that.)

Now Peter concludes his epistle with a warning to avoid error, and then he gives an encouragement to grow. The warning is given in verse 17. "You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men," (like those men that twist the things that Paul wrote and the

rest of Scripture), "...that you not be carried away by them and fall from your steadfastness."

That's quite a warning, "Fall from your steadfastness." That indicates that we are never out of danger. Even the "steadfast" can fall. Now what he does not mean is that they can fall within their steadfastness. The word is "fall out of" your steadfastness. In other words, we can drift away from it, and then we fall. Think of Solomon, known for his wisdom. At the beginning of his reign, 1 Kings 3, verse 3 says, "Now Solomon loved the Lord." He was a young man. He'd been given great wisdom. He loved the Lord. Then, at the end, 1 Kings 11, verse 1 says, "Now Solomon loved many foreign women." He fell into idolatry. Even the most mature must always be vigilant—maintain their steadfastness. That's Paul's teaching. 1 Corinthians 10, verse 12, "Let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall."

But we can progress in the faith very well if we're obedient and we're in the Word of God—which is to say we can't progress very well if we aren't and if we're worrying about the negative all the time. We need to hear the negative. We need to hear the warnings of Scripture. But we need more than that. We also need the positive.

And that's what Peter ends on, a positive note, in verse 18. "...but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen." In other words, growth is possible, steadfastness is possible., development to the glory of God is possible. Growth keeps us stable. And we grow through the study of Scripture. It's that simple. We feed our souls by the Word of God. You're feeding your soul right now, through the reading and teaching of the Word of God.

I cannot emphasize that too much. I know I sound like a broken record about this. You've heard me say this many times, and I keep saying it, and I'm certainly trying to live it myself, daily. We grow through the study of the Word of God. And so we all need to be students of the Word of God. Some have a greater advantage, in that having gone to seminary or being in a position where it's our work to study—what a blessed work that is. But we all need to use our time wisely and study the Bible.

In 1 Peter, chapter 2, verse 2 he wrote, "Like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation." That's the way you grow. Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the Word of Christ.

There's no standing still in the Christian life. We must always be growing, progressing in our knowledge and walk with Christ who is God. He's God the Son. He's the second person of the Trinity. He is Lord. And Peter ends by saying, "the glory goes to Him, now and forever." What glory is that that he's speaking of? —Divine glory. Peter began the epistle by affirming Christ's deity in verse 1. He ends in the way he began — Christ is God. He's equal with the Father and the Spirit in essence, attributes, power and glory. Therefore He is worthy of our worship, worthy of our obedience. That is required of us. So may we live our lives for Him, —for His glory, not our own satisfaction. That's wisdom, because it's always wise, it's always smart to obey God. He has the final say in everything.

It's also wise because this world is coming to an end someday. All agree, whether a poet, or a scientist, or a Viking, this world will end. Not because that's just the natural order of things, it's just entropy, "It's all just going to run down some day. That's the way it is." —No! It's because there's a plan, and it's wise to heed that plan, and to follow it, to know that things are coming to an end. Because God is in control, and He's moving things toward that end. Not in a pessimistic sense, that shouldn't give us a pessimistic outlook, but a hopeful outlook, because what He's moving everything toward, is a glorious, triumphant conclusion, and we're a part of that—if we're believers in Jesus Christ.

So Peter asked, "Since that is true, what sort of people ought you to be?" The answer is godly people, obedient and active people, obedient to Christ who is coming back to establish His kingdom on the earth, and bring about the eternal state, the new heavens and the new earth.

Have you recognized Him as Lord and Savior? If not, you are still living independently. —At least in your mind you are. You're living for the moment. You're

living without a care for the future. That means you don't have this hope that is present here in this passage that we've studied. Whether the end comes with a "roar and heat" or with old age and death, the end is coming for all of us. The only way to prepare for that is to look to the Son of God, the Savior. Christ died for sinners, took their punishment in their place so that all who believe in Him would be saved. Trust in Christ. Be saved, and know that the future is not bleak, but glorious and eternal. May God encourage us with that and encourage a right response.

Let's close in a word of prayer, and in the prayer let's prepare our hearts for the Lord's Supper and a time of worship. Let's pray.

Father, we do thank you for this book, this brief book by the apostle. What a great opportunity it is for us, and great privilege to be able to read it and study it and reflect upon the dangers that face us today with the error that is prevalent. There is nothing new about the error that we have in our day, it's been in every generation. There've always been false teachers that have distorted the truth, and there will be to the end. We thank you for the wisdom that is communicated to us through Your Word. And I pray that we will heed the instruction that the apostle gave. And in the positive sense we will look and "hasten the day" of Your Son's coming and our Lord, and that we would be obedient in the meantime, and serve Him faithfully.

Lord, we thank You that He's coming again. We thank You that He came 2000 years ago. He entered into time and space and into human history. He became a man and He died in our place. And as we reflect upon that in the moments to come, I pray that You'd bless us, sanctify us, make us more like Christ, give us more and more of Your mind. And we pray these things in Christ's name. Amen.

(End of Audio)