

Epistle of Second Peter & Jude IX

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Let's read the last two sections beginning with 2-Peter 2:20—I think this is something that we really need to take to heart, because we are again going to see this happen with different people who are involved.

2-Peter 2:20: “For if, after having escaped the moral defilements of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they again become entangled in *corruptions* and are [defeated] overcome by them, the final end is worse than the beginning.” This is talking clearly, without a doubt—put in your margin: Heb. 6, the unpardonable sin—that they cannot be revived to repentance because they have crucified Christ. We need to understand something very, very, very important, which I'll emphasize as we get down toward Passover. When we are baptized with Christ we are co-joined into His death. We have made a covenant of death with Christ, that if we don't fulfill the covenant we die! It's that plain! So that's what he's saying here.

Verse 21: “For it would have been better for them not to have known the **way of righteousness**... [We're going to focus on the way of righteousness this time, as I said in the last section.] ...than, after knowing *it*, to turn back from the Holy commandment... [When you see the Holy commandment, this means everything that was in the Gospel] ...*that was* delivered to them. But the pronouncement *found* in the true proverb has happened to them: The dog has returned to *eat* his own vomit; and the sow *that was* washed *has returned* to her wallowing place in *the filthy mire*” (vs 21-22).

We're going to see that living examples happening today. I hate to see it, but we just have to define what is actually and really happening. And it's amazing, when all the constraints are lifted off—which is what God is doing now with the churches everywhere—He's lifting off all the artificial constraints so that ministers are not going to rule over the brethren so that you don't have carnal fears. But then you have to choose yourself. The ministers have to choose, too. This is why you see everything kind of like an explosion just coming up and pieces going everywhere—with every wind of doctrine, with every slight of hand, with every lying and ticking deceivableness that has ever come along.

Jude 20: “But you, beloved... [Here's what we are to do in the face of these terrible circumstances that we find in the world and in the Church.] ...*be* building up yourselves on your most Holy faith... [and this is one of those middle

verbs—you are building yourself. It's something that you are doing and the result will come back to you as Christ in you.] ...praying in the Holy Spirit, *so that* you keep yourselves... [again, middle voice] ...in the love of God...” (vs 20-21). Why does he say that? *Because this is the only thing that helps us to endure when there are troubles!* What helps you when you're really down? What helps you when you have really deep troubles?

- When you know that someone loves you.
- When you know that God loves you.
- When you know that Christ is there for you regardless of what the external circumstances may be.
- You know that everything's going to be fine.

That's what we need to do.

“...keep yourselves in the love of God, *while* you are personally awaiting the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. Now on the one hand, show mercy to those individuals who are doubting” (vs 21-22).

This is telling us how do we handle the situation with brethren that we know are being affected by false teachings and false prophets. There are some people who just don't know. They have become such Bible illiterates that they really don't know. And now we're dealing with skillful deception; skillful misapplication of Scripture, that it's hard to detect because it sounds so good. One of the things they keep saying is: we need to return to historical Christianity.

What does that mean? When you first hear that—back to historical Christianity—you think back to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John—correct? *Yes!* But what that means—historic Christianity—is Roman Catholicism and the fathers of the Church: Athanasius, St. Augustine, St. Thomas, Ignatius, etc., etc.—all of those. So, if they are doubting, you show mercy on them. And you say, ‘I understand that.’

Let's really look at the Scriptures here. You can ask them, ‘Do you really believe in the Scriptures?’ *Yes!* Like in writing the book, *Lord, What Should I Do?*—it was prompted by one man who said, ‘Would you please give me a list a Scriptures, because my wife will believe the Scriptures.’ That's how I wrote the book, it just got bigger and bigger and bigger. When it was up to about 25 pages; this has got to go to everybody. So that's how it came about—it sort of evolved. So, if they're doubting, show them the Scriptures.

Verse 23: “Now on the other hand, save others with fear...” In other words, they’re so far over the edge, you’ve got to really tell them that things are going to happen! God’s judgment is going to come upon you.

- Do you really want to fight God?
- Do you really want to challenge God?
- Do you really want to say that God lied?
- Do you really want to say that Christ did everything for you so you have nothing to do?

“...snatching them out of the fire, hating even the garment that has been defiled by the flesh.... [That’s a pretty strong attitude you have to have for some people who have gone that far.] ...But to Him... [now then, here’s what we need to be doing] ...**Who is able to keep them from falling**, and to bring *them* into the presence of His own glory, blameless in exceeding joy... [always looking to the goal; always looking to being a son or daughter of God in the Kingdom of God in splendor and glory. Remember, we are not adopted; **we are the sons!** We received the Spirit from the Father.] ...to the only wise God our Savior, be *the* glory and greatness, *the* might and authority, even now, and into all the ages of eternity, AMEN” (vs 23-25).

Let’s look a little bit concerning the *way of righteousness*, which will be:

- the way of life
- the way of God
- the way of love

vs

- the way of falsehood

Let’s go back to 2-Peter 2:2, because first of all, one of the things that they will start doing: “And many people will follow *as authoritative* their destructive ways; *and* because of them, the way of the Truth will be blasphemed.” That means *evil spoken of*.

When you consider some *little things*, consider Lot’s wife, to her it was just a *little thing* to look back; after all, she was just curious. But she was told not to look back and she turned into a pillar of salt. You can go through many examples similar to that in the Bible—take the two sons of Aaron: Nadab and Abihu. What did they do? *They got slovenly and sort of ‘half-lit’ and they let the fire go out!* They figured well, we better get the fire up here. So they put ‘strange fire’ on the altar. That was the fire that was started by God when He put His presence in the tabernacle; and He said to keep it burning.

They should have gone to their father and said, ‘Look, we’ve let it go out, ask God what should be done.’ Maybe He would have spared their lives,

but they said, ‘Oh, no, we’ll put fire on’—they put ‘strange fire’ on it, so what happened? *ZAP! The fire got them.* So, before people consider blaspheming God and calling Him a liar and calling the way of Truth the wrong way, they need to consider there’s some great, great consequences that are going to happen.

Let’s come to something which is very important, and this is a very basic Scripture—John 14:6—and this is one of the profound Scriptures of everything that we do in following Jesus Christ. This is done in a very emphatic way; many of the things here are done in an emphatic way.

John 14:6: “Jesus said to him, ‘I am **the way**... [If there’s a way of Truth, it’s Christ; if there’s a way of righteousness, it’s Christ.] ...and **the Truth**, and **the life**; **no one comes to the Father except through Me.**” There’s only one way; Christ is *the way*. What did He say about the sheepfold and the shepherd? *He said, ‘I am the door of the sheepfold. If any come up some other way—there’s only one way—the same is a thief and a robber.’* It says, ‘narrow is the gate and straight is the way that leads to life—and **few** there be that find it. But broad is the way and broad is the gate which leads unto destruction—and **many** are going in at that gate’ (Matt. 7:13-14) This is the way. We’re comparing the way of righteousness vs the way of the world.

One of the things that Abraham was commended for was because he was always going to go in the way of God. As you examine that, you will see that he had certain sins, but the one I like the most is where he went down to Egypt and even though he didn’t tell the truth concerning his wife, God worked it out so he walked off with all kinds of loot. That was something!

Genesis 18:19: “For I know him... [God speaking of Abraham. Does God know us? *Yes, He knows us—doesn’t He? Every bit!*] ...that he will command his children and his house after him, and **they shall keep the way of the LORD**... [That’s important!] ...to do justice and judgment, that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which He has spoken of him.” (vs 18-19). So even Abraham was walking in the way of righteousness, in the way of God.

Let’s go to Psalms 25, and we’re going to find that we have the *way of righteousness*, which includes

- life
- salvation
- all right doctrine
- all right behavior
- faith
- hope
- love

—and all of these things together.

Psalm 25:9: “The meek He will guide in judgment; and the meek He will teach His way.” Keep that in mind, brethren. It’s really struck me. Trying to see and understand what God has had us do in helping the brethren.

I’ve got a whole stack of letters of people writing and saying they’re just thankful for the things that they get. But I tell you one thing, when that care package comes and they open it up, and it is full (trust me) and they see that, what we are telling them is this: We love you, God loves you, this is vital important information that you need for your spiritual salvation. Then when they start getting into the tapes and studies that are there they let their friends know. Kind of like the widow woman who found the coin that was lost. She’s happy and invites everyone over.

So, I have people writing me and saying, ‘I am making five copies of your tapes and sending them out to other people. It’s going out. We are reaching out. God is helping us with the little bit that we have. But I tell you one thing that I’ve learned in this whole thing, is that if we can have the meekness, that we need to ask God for—it’s a spiritual quality which comes from God; you can’t work it up, you can’t humble yourself, you can’t fast it in, you can’t think it in, *it’s a gift of God*—have the meekness of Christ and the true humility that we understand that the only way we’re going to understand the Word of God is with His Spirit and with rightly dividing it and with loving God. That is the only way.

I know what’s going to happen, brethren. *God is going to give us understanding that we are going to*, though as small as we be, *confound the mighty*; confound the experts. I just know it! Just pray for all of us that we can stay in this attitude. That’s what God wants. He doesn’t care how tall we are, how short we are, how thin we are, how fat we are—now maybe we’re concerned with that because we’re in the flesh—God does not care whether it’s male or female, young or old, but He cares that we love Him and that we’re humble before Him; and that humility comes from Christ. And in the final analysis, when you truly, truly, truly understand it, God the Father is the most humble being in the universe. That is amazing when you come to really understand that!

“...the meek He will teach His way. All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth to those who keep His covenant and His testimonies” (vs 9-10). Every way of God; all the ways—but you have to keep that covenant and keep His testimonies.

Let’s go to Psalm 119:1; you can give two or three sermons just off this first verse. I did a series in

Psalm 119 once and I felt inadequate when I did it. Once you go through all of it—if you’re having troubles with the laws of God, whether we ought to keep them or not—you do this before you throw them away; and you can tell this to your friends who are ready to throw them away: David is a man after God’s heart and he’s going to be in the Kingdom of God—he wrote this, was inspired to write it—suggest to them that they fast and they pray and they study this whole Psalm on their knees word for word and ask God for understanding. And if they’re truly sincere, I think God will bring them back. There is no way you can read and study this Psalm without just marveling at the tremendous and wonderful things that are in here.

Psalm 119:1: “Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the Law of the LORD.” There’s a blessing, not a cursing.

Verse 27: “Make me to understand the way of Your precepts... [the way of righteousness is the way of the law; the way of the commandments; the way of the precepts; the way of judgments. If these all come from God—Who is Truth, Who is good, Who is right, Who is love—are they not all good? *Yes! They’re good and marvelous, indeed!*] ...and so shall I speak of Your wonderful works.”

Verse 29: “Remove from me the way of lying... [and boy, that’s sure true. This ‘old tricky-dicky’ human nature. We all have this human nature.] ...and grant me Your Law graciously... [through mercy and goodness] ...I have chosen the way of Truth... [the way of righteousness encompasses many things—doesn’t it?] ...I have laid Your judgments before me. I cleave to Your testimonies; O LORD, do not put me to shame. I will run the way of Your commandments... [not just walk, not just crawl, but *run!* A little excitement and zeal!] ... for You shall enlarge my heart. Teach me, O LORD, the way of Your statutes, and I shall keep it unto the end. Give me understanding, that I may keep Your law and observe it with all my heart. Make me to walk in the path of Your commandments, for I delight in them” (vs 29-35). And on and on and on through the whole 119th Psalm.

Let’s go to Proverbs 16:29. This is something! *The way of God, there can’t be any greater way!* The reason we have so much difficulty is because we’re doing it in a world that is hostile and contrary to it, that’s why. That’s why the Sabbath is so important if we treat it as the time of Holiness that God wants us to and really fellowship with God the Father and Jesus Christ and drink in of the Word of God, drink in of the Spirit of God, then are we not going to be lifted up? *Yes!* Can we not face the world greater next week? *Yes!* Will we fail

sometime during the week? *Yes!* That's why Sabbath is coming next week, too.

- It helps us!
- It inspires us!
- It uplifts us!
- *God wants that*

Proverbs ^[transcriber's correction] 16:29: "A violent man lures his neighbor and leads him into a way *that is* not good. He shuts his eyes to devise perverse things; and moving his lips, he brings evil to pass. The gray head *is* a crown of glory *if* it is found in the way of righteousness" (vs 29-31).

Let's go to Romans 5:17 to understand why. It is so profound that when they go against and blaspheme the way of righteousness, that there is no longer any sacrifice for sin, because God has done something, as we have mentioned before, which is very profound, and to be very uplifting for us, which is this:

Romans 5:17: "For if by the offense of the one man death reigned by the one... [we all die in Adam; we have 'the law of sin and death' because of Adam and his sin] ...how much more shall those who receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness reign in life by the one, Jesus Christ.)" Which God gives to those who love Him, who have His Spirit—to inspire us.

God wants you to understand this: He's saying, 'Yes, I know you have human nature. Yes, I know you're overcoming. Yes, I know you have difficulties. Yes, I realize that, but I want you to know that if you're loving me with all your heart, all your mind, all your soul, all your being, and you're living within My grace, I'm imputing to you the *righteousness of Christ—the absolute perfection of Christ*. Now, that's something to really think on! That is a concept you have to grow in understanding to grasp more fully. That is the *gift of righteousness!* 'shall reign in life by the One, Jesus Christ.'

We can look at the way of the wicked and all of that—we won't get into all of that except to just give you some Scriptures. What are the two things concerning human nature: Proverbs 14:12; 16:25: "There is a way that seems right to a man, but the end thereof *is* the way of death." Isa. 59 talks about all the way and the schemes and the problems of wickedness.

Romans 3:10^[transcriber's correction] defines it, the way of the world; there it is, we can look out and see it: "Exactly as it is written: 'For there is not a righteous one... [that is *of himself*] ...—not even one! There is not one who understands; there is not one who seeks after God" (vs 10-11).

Yea, go to and fro up and down the streets of San Jose here today, ask in the shopping malls, ask

in the parking lot, ask them:

- Are you seeking God?
- Where is God?
- Do you believe in God?
- Do you know Jesus Christ?

They did this in China, and they found that most Chinese say, 'We don't believe in God. We don't believe in any god.' *None is seeking God!*

Verse 12: "They have all gone out of the way... [the way of God—tie this in with Gen. 6, that they corrupted God's way.] ...together they have *all* become depraved. There is not *even* one who is practicing kindness. No, there is not so much as one! Their throats *are* like an open grave; with their tongues they have used deceit; *the* venom of asps *is* under their lips, whose mouths are full of cursing and bitterness; their feet *are* swift to shed blood" (vs 12-15). Bosnia, Herzegovina, Middle East, Rwanda, on and on and on—*yes!*

Verse 16: "Destruction and misery *are* in their ways." Next time you watch this peace effort that's going on over there in the former Yugoslavia, it's destruction and misery—those people are miserable! Hating each other; killing each other; vengeance! Five-hundred years, inbred in every generation! What has it resulted in? *Death, misery, rottenness!*

Verse 17: "And *the* way of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes" (vs 17-18). That's the way of the world *vs* the way of righteousness.

Now, after we get done with all the way of God and everything else, let's come to 1-Corinthians 12:31—here's something that we need to understand. When it's all done even within the Church, brethren. When it's all done with everything that we are doing, the underpinning, as we finished off there in the book of Jude, 'but keep yourselves in the love of God.'

1-Corinthians 12:31: "But earnestly desire the more *edifying* gifts; and yet I show you a way far surpassing *all these*." ***That is the way of the love of God.***

And I tell you what, people are beginning to understand, once they hear these sermons and listen to them. I got a letter from a man in South Africa and he said, 'I've gone over the things that you have sent me and thank you for sending them.' He said, 'I was beating the flesh to overcome and I could never overcome. I never could understand why I couldn't overcome. I was told to work harder. I was told to fast more. I was told to pray more. I was told to study more. But I was never told to love God. I was never told to seek His love. I was never told that you are under the umbrella of grace and that if you seek

to love God you're going to overcome more because you're loving God.'

And you're going to find the same thing that is true: So are all the other brethren. That's why it's more excellent. You can take all the qualities of men, you can read 1-Cor. 13—we've gone through that in the *Love Series*—you can read it. It doesn't matter how great you are, how smart you are, how intellectual you are, doesn't matter what you do; if you don't love God and if you don't have the love of God, it's all going to come to nothing! That's the true way of righteousness. If we can have the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, let it also be His love for the Father, His faith in the Father, His hope what the Father was going to do.

There's one thing that's very important, let's go to Galatians 2:20—this becomes very profound. "I have been crucified with Christ... ['ego' your ego, yourself] ...yet I live.... [when you're baptized you were joined into His death] ...*Indeed*, it is no longer I; but Christ lives in me. For *the life* that I am now living in *the flesh*, I live by faith—that *very faith* of the Son of God... [the Son of God's own faith within Him—that's what we need to come to: the faith of Christ, the hope of Christ, the love of Christ *within us!* Then we can do the things that are really pleasing to God.] ...Who loved me and gave Himself for me. I do not nullify the grace of God; for *the life* that I am now living in *the flesh*, I live by faith—that *very faith* of the Son of God, if righteousness *is* through *works of law*, then Christ died in vain" (vs 20-21). We'll understand that even more fully when we get to it.

- We're to hate every false way.
- We're to turn aside all these ways.
- Live the way that Christ wants us to live.

Now let's come to 2-Peter, the third chapter, and we'll finish here today. After all of this, Peter is inspiring them. We know that he's writing this because he knew that he was going to die shortly—he said so in the first chapter.

2-Peter 3:1: "Now, beloved, I am writing this second epistle to you; in *both*, I am stirring up your pure minds... [Isn't that wonderful? It's one thing I pray for, brethren. Wouldn't it be nice to have an absolutely pure mind? What a thing!] ...by causing you to remember.... [How do you do this?] ...*in order* for you to be mindful of the words that were spoken before by the Holy prophets, and of the commandment of the Lord and Savior, *spoken* by us, the apostles" (vs 1-2).

Now, let's talk a little bit about *pureness*. I'm not going to go in great detail into it, but in some. What is pure? *The Word of God is pure! The commandments of God are pure.* And the Word of God is purified like silver seven times.

Let's go to Titus, the first chapter, because there are some things here that are important for us to know. There are some people you can just never convince. The reason being is that God hasn't called them. I'll tell you one thing though, when we have a pure mind, we still need to be 'wise as serpents and harmless as doves' because with the pureness of mind there also comes an innocence and naivety that some people can leverage to themselves. So you need to guard that carefully. But *pureness of mind* should be toward God and toward each of us.

Titus 1:15: "To the pure, all things *are* pure... [One of the most dastardly sins that have ever been done against the people of God is to take that *pureness of mind*, to take that innocence and naiveté and being to leverage it to men to accomplish what they want. God is going to bring them into judgment for that.] ... but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing *is* pure; rather, both their minds and consciences are defiled. They personally profess to know God, but in *their* works they deny Him, being abominable and disobedient, and reprobate unto every good work" (vs 15-16). There's the contrast.

Isn't that something! Brethren, one of my desires is *to know the deep things of God* (1-Cor. 2)—*by His Spirit* He'll reveal the deep things of God—and to be able to teach this to the brethren. That's what I truly desire. And also, I'll tell you one other thing: My greatest joy is when I can sit down and teach the Word of God. That's one of the joys in my life. So if we can view God's way that way, and let it be something that can inspire us, because I don't think we really grasp the fullness of the blessing of having all of the Word of God available to us. We can sit in Sabbath services and everyone of us can have a Bible; and everyone of us can study it, and everyone of us can drink in of it; and that God would send His Spirit so we all understand together, to lift us all to the understanding of Christ, so that we can have the pure mind that God wants us to have. That's all part of conversion.

Psalm 18:21: "For I have kept the ways of the LORD, and have not wickedly departed from my God... [Doesn't that describe us? *Yes, it does!*] ...for all His ordinances were before me, and I did not put away His statutes from me. I was also blameless before Him, and I kept myself from my iniquity.... [Whatever your great weakness is, God will help you keep yourself from that.] ...Therefore, the LORD has recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in His eyes. With the merciful, You will show Yourself merciful; with an upright man You will show Yourself upright; with the pure You will show Yourself pure; and with the crooked You will show Yourself cunning" (vs 21-26). So He renders back to

each person. That is tremendous!

Can we let God stir up our pure minds, as the Apostle Peter wrote here—2-Peter 3:3: “Knowing this first... [something primary that we need to know] ...that in the last days there will come mockers... [we expect that in the world—don’t we? Isn’t it a shame when it happens in the Church? And it has happened!] ...walking according to their own personal lusts... [and I tell you before God, in Christ’s name they do!] ...and asking, ‘Where is the promise of His coming? For since the forefathers died, everything is continuing exactly the same from the beginning of creation’” (vs 3-4).

There’s a tremendous lesson for us. We need to be ready because we don’t know when Christ is going to come. But also there’s a lesson in there for us. I’m not going to say He may come tonight, because He’s not, I can guarantee you that! But none of us have any guarantee how long we’re going to live—not a single one of us! Every year, when we look in the mirror, and we see a little more gray up here and we see a little more wrinkle here and other things that come along, we know we are a day closer to the grave—don’t we? Now, a lot of people do a lot of things to keep that from happening, but no one has done it! Not even the Pharaohs who did it for immortality; but they take out these skeletons that are there—all still wrapped up—and what are they? *Dead!* There’s no immortality! So, we need to let God work with us now, while He can.

There are those who are mocking; they did with Jesus. This is actually a prophecy of Jesus. If you’ve taken anything from someone mocking you, I don’t think anyone was more mocked than Jesus Christ. What did they say when He was on the cross dying? *If You be of God, and God delight in You—and they shot out their lip (Psa. 22)—come down off the cross and then we will believe.*

Psalms 35:15: “But in my stumbling they rejoiced and gathered themselves together; the attackers whom I did not know gathered themselves against me. They slandered without ceasing. As profane mockers, they gnashed at me with their teeth” (vs 15-16). You go back and see what happened during some of the Feasts that Jesus kept. Just before He was crucified, what did they do? *They had all the hypocrites and all the mockers come up—yes, they did!*

Verse 17: “Lord, how long will You look on? rescue my soul from their destructions, my darling from the lions.... [v 18 is a very interesting one, and that ties in with Heb. 2 also] ... I will give You thanks in the great congregation; I will praise You among a mighty throng” (vs 17-18). This is actually a prophecy of Christ. He’s not ashamed to call us ‘brethren.’ And in the great congregation—that is at the resurrection—there is going to be the

praise of God. I tell you, that’s one thing I’m looking forward to; that is the resurrection.

There are many other that have to do with ‘the last days shall come’; the end-times, so forth. Paul was also focusing in on the last times. It’s interesting, that every one of these that we have recorded here in the Scriptures, they all focus in on the last times—don’t they? Somewhere, one place or other, they focus in on the end-times and the return of Christ.

2-Timothy 3:1: “Know this also, that in *the* last days perilous times shall come.” It’s perilous! If you want to know how perilous they are for some people, talk to someone who has an environmental allergy—they could not walk in this room without having some reaction, because of all the chemicals in the rug, the floor, the electricity coming out. Just try walking down the street—perilous times everywhere.

(go to the next track)

Verse 2: “For men will be lovers of self...” This is the whole philosophy of the world. What is the thing that’s taught in schools today? *Self-esteem, love yourself!* Then comes: get in touch with your helper. You can’t see your helper, but you can call upon your helper. They’re teaching witchcraft and demonism in the second, third and fourth grade.

When I was in Nashville, they had a big 8-1/2x11 book, about two inches thick, on witchcraft—you can go buy it. I’m not going to, but I thumbed through it. It shows you everything about witchcraft. It says how to form a coven. What it means to get in a circle and hold hands? What do these symbols mean? What does a cross mean? What does a dagger mean? What do these certain squirrely little letters mean? And I think if we really knew everything that was in there, we would see that 20% of the women walking around that we think are just normal, natural women, are really witches! Unreal! I was dumbfounded! I was just aghast! Here it was in a public bookstore, you can buy it—\$39.95! Needless to say, that’s one book I didn’t buy.

But it all starts out: ‘lovers of yourself.’ That’s the worst thing. What does God say: ‘Love God first, your neighbor as yourself.’ So you are third! If you start being first: you’re selfish, you’re self-centered, you’re conceited, and all of those things come along with it.

“...lovers of money, braggarts, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection... [No! Nothing is right anymore! No such thing as a wonderful marriage any longer.] ...implacable, slanderers, without self-control, savage, despisers of those who are good... [Oh yeah! You try and do good and you end up being hated.] ...betrayers, reckless,

egotistical, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God... [they sure are] ...having an outward appearance of Godliness...” (vs 2-5). You will see this, I guarantee you, whichever team wins the Superbowl, they’re going to say, ‘Thank God; God gave me this and my Lord Jesus Christ made it possible.’ *Form of Godliness!* I don’t think Christ had anything to do with who wins or loses.

“...but denying the power of *true* Godliness. But *as for you*, turn away from *all* these... [We’re not to fellowship with them,; associate with them and all of this.] ...For from *men such as* these come those who are worming their way into houses, and are gaining control over empty-headed *gullible* women given over to *various* sins, *being* driven by all kinds of lust.... [Just reveling and banqueting and adultering and fornicating and all of that going on] ...*They are* always learning but *are* never able to come to *the* knowledge of *the* Truth” (vs 5-7). Isn’t that true?

I mean, they just now have a brand new photo from the Hubble telescope that they have learned there are things out in space they never knew—but did it bring them closer to God? *No!* Did anyone of them say, ‘Oh, God, how fantastic You are! That You created all of this! That now we can see the greatness of Your work!’ *NO!* ‘Now we can figure out the evolution and maybe the beginning, the origin, of the universe.’ *Nonsense!* They’re never going to figure it out on their own. *God did it!*

Let’s come back here to 2-Peter 3:3: “...walking according to their own personal lusts, and asking, ‘Where is the promise of His coming?.... [There are some people who say you don’t even need to read the book of Revelation anymore; that’s already fulfilled.] ...For since the forefathers died, everything is continuing exactly the same from the beginning of creation.’ But this *fact* is hidden from them—they *themselves* choosing to *ignore* it—that by the Word of God the heavens existed of old, and *the* earth was formed out of water and by water” (vs 3-5). That is sure true!

I found out myself. I climbed to the top of a 11,000-foot continental divide in Wyoming. I didn’t have to climb very high. I got up on the top of this mountain and, lo and behold, there were fossils of trilobites and everything all over the place. You just run around and pick them up by the handfuls, right up there, 11,000-feet, that was once under the ocean and now it’s lifted up. Yes! Yes, indeed!

Romans 1:18—they knew God once, they knew the Divinity of God once. “Indeed, *the* wrath of God is revealed from heaven upon all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the Truth in unrighteousness.” How do they hold it back? *We won’t let any Bibles into the schools. We will not*

allow any discussion of God in the schools. We will not allow any presentation of creationist-scientists. Yet, the creationists-scientists know that no doubt that it was created. So they’re holding it back! They are deliberately blinding the people and keeping them in ignorance.

Verse 19: “Because that which may be known of God is manifest among them, for God has manifested *it* to them... [Can you not help but look out and see the heavens and the glory of God and the wonderful things that are there. Marvelous, indeed! And to say, ‘Oh, this just sort of happened by an accident!’] ...for the invisible things of Him are perceived from *the* creation of *the* world, being understood by the things that were made—both His eternal power and Godhead—so that they are without excuse” (vs 19-20).

Now you know why God is going to have the synagogue of Satan come and worship before our feet. That’s going to be part of their repentance. Isn’t that going to be something! Think on that!

2-Peter 3:6: “*And* by which the world at that time, having been deluged with water, was itself destroyed.... [Just wiped everything out] ...But the present heavens and earth are being held in store by His Word, *and* are being reserve for fire in *the* day of *the* judgment and destruction of ungodly people” (vs 6-7). That’s telling us an awful lot.

Let’s understand that *by the very Word of Jesus Christ He is upholding this entire universe!* You think of that now! Our very existence, our very life, our environment, our solar system—the whole universe—is depending on the Word and the Truth of Christ! That’s why it’s impossible for God to lie.

Hebrews 1:1: “God, Who spoke to the fathers at different times in the past and in many ways by the prophets, has spoken to us in these last days by *His* Son.” You think of that! How many people have said, ‘I’ll believe God if I could talk to Him.’ God sent Christ. Did they believe Him? *No!* Would they believe Him today? *No!* That’s a phenomenal thing! Wonder what it was like to be one of the twelve disciples, to be the twelve apostles; to be with Christ, to walk with Him, to hear Him? Oh my, that must have been something, brethren!

Verse 2: “Whom He has appointed heir of all things [the universe], by Whom also He made the worlds; Who, being *the* brightness of *His* glory and *the* exact image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His own power...” (vs 2-3). There’s going to come a time by the Word of God that it’s all going to be folded up and made new.

Verse 10: “And, ‘You, Lord, in the beginning did lay the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are *the* works of Your hands. They will

perish, but You remain *forever*; and *they* will all grow old like a garment, and You will roll them up like a covering, and they shall be changed; but You are the same, and Your years will not end” (vs 10-12). Now, that’s some power! Aren’t you glad you have Christ upholding it? Could you think of any other person you would have holding it up? Any man? *No! No!* If they had the power to do that, oooo!

There was this ad with Jimmy Jones and Deion Sanders advertising for Nike shoes, I think it was, and it showed Deion wanted defense and offense and baseball and football, and then it showed Deion running some great play and Jimmy Jones, after he got done seeing that, he said, ‘Hot damn, if I had eleven men like that I could rule the world.’ How would you like to have Jimmy Jones sitting at the controls of the universe—at a whim he could fold them up. NO!

2-Peter 3:7: “...and are being reserved for fire in *the* day of *the* judgment and destruction of ungodly people.” What happens is this: When the ungodly, who have not repented, rejected salvation, are cast into the lake of fire, the lake of fire then consumes the whole earth and the immediate atmosphere around us. It’s going to be awesome! It won’t affect the sons of God. Why? *Because we’re going to be spirit beings!* And God is going to purge everything that there was of the physical earth; purge everything that there was of all human activity—good and bad—and then He’s going create a ‘new heaven and new earth wherein there is no sea’; but where there is righteousness! And then it’s going to be fit for New Jerusalem. Now Peter did not have the understanding of Revelation at this point, so he kind of kaleidoscopes these events together.

Verse 8: “Now, beloved, do not let this one fact be hidden from you; that with the Lord, one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” This is where people get the 7,000-year plan, especially where you have in Rev. 20 about we will rule and reign with Christ a thousand years, picturing the Millennial Sabbath.

However, if you go back and try and construct the time out of chronology—which you can—and Archbishop Usher did this and he came up with a chronology that Christ was going to return in 2004 (I believe that’s the correct date that he set). Well, we know it’s not going to be 2004, because Christ said ‘no man knows the day.’ So it isn’t going to be.

Now, consider this within every chronology: So-and-so lived to be so long and begat so-and-so and lived to be, say, 500-years and he died. Did he die on the day of his 500th birthday? Did he die two days before he was 501? How many months slide-time do you have? *Eleven!* So there’s an average of

six-months slide-time on every genealogy that you go through. So, though you can layout genealogies and you can get things fairly accurate, unless you know precisely the exact age of the individual, you don’t know how much slack-time there is involved in it. So, God has already built in plenty of time that’s necessary to finish the time to get to what He knows is 6,000-years.

Verse 9: “The Lord is not delaying the promise of *His coming*, as some in their own minds reckon delay; rather, *He* is longsuffering toward us...” Some people got made because Christ didn’t return in 1844, 1918, 1947, 1975, 1988. There was book put out in 1986 that said ‘88 reasons why Jesus Christ is going to return Feast of Trumpets 1988’—did any of you ever see that book? Quite a book! Well, we’re still here, He hasn’t returned! He’s doing this because He’s giving us time—whatever time there is!

“...not desiring *that* anyone should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (v 9). That’s why! God can choose when He wants to—right? *Yes!* God is not going to come at the demand of any man!

Verse 10: “However, the day of the Lord will come as a thief in *the* night, in which the universe itself will disappear... [Here’s where Peter brings all the forces together. He didn’t understand the difference there of the thousand years as we have in Rev. 20.] ...with a mighty roar... [Now there’s the inversion of ‘big bang’—right? *Yes!*] ...and the elements will be dissolved, burning with intense heat, and the earth and the works in it will be burned up. Since all these things are *going* to be destroyed...” (vs 10-11).

He’s giving this so we can understand something. You think about this the next time you watch a special on volcanoes and you see all this lava burping and rolling down. It shows some that specialize in going up there and they have to have this special protection so they can withstand 2,000-degrees. They go dip out some of the hot lava. You think: how long would you last in the lava? And then you have a good idea of what the lake of fire is going to be like. I know every time I see those it just sends chills down my spine! I can almost feel the heat coming out of the television set. Now, this is not my version of Dante’s *Inferno!* Please understand, but this is trying to get a reality of what it’s going to be like.

“...what kind of persons ought you to be in Holy conduct and Godliness” (v 11). Remember, there’s going to be a time when it’s going to be too late. Remember Lazarus and the rich man. The rich man said, ‘Oh, Lord, Lord, Lord, Lord!’ Sorry, there’s a great gulf fixed between us and you. Too

late! At the lake of fire there's going to be what? *Weeping and gnashing of teeth! Too late!*

“While you are looking forward to and striving for the coming of the Day of God, during which *day* the heavens, being on fire, will be destroyed, and *the* elements, burning with intense heat, will melt?... [Man! He really has gotten on to that here—hasn't he? *Yes!*] ...But according to His promise, we are expecting a new heaven and a new earth... [So he understood that after that it's coming] ...in which **righteousness dwells**.... [And that's where we want to be, brethren.] ...For this reason, beloved, *since* you are anticipating these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless” (vs 12-14).

Let's see what the Apostle Paul said about that and what we need to be doing constantly, on an ongoing basis. We've got enough of our own problems and difficulties going along, that we need to be inspired on the Sabbath. I tell you what, brethren, if we can't come to services on the Sabbath and be inspired and uplifted, what are you going to do the rest of the week?

Philippians 3:7: “Yet the things that were gain to me, these things I have counted *as* loss for the sake of Christ.” You sit down and think about that sometime yourself. What is that I really want to keep? If you have Christ, do you not have everything? If you have the Holy Spirit, do you not have everything? Do you not have more than the richest person in the world, who in his own secret little world is lonely and miserable and shriveled up? *Yes!*]

Verse 8: “But then truly, I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count *them* as dung [‘skubalon’] that I may gain Christ and may be found in Him... [that's what we want, brethren] ...not having my own righteousness, which *is derived* from law, but that *righteousness* which *is by the* faith of Christ—the righteousness of God *that is* based on faith... [that you can be perfect and Holy and blameless—no fault!] ...That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death” (vs 8-10).

I guess Paul went through so many things, I still have a hard time grasping that. That he said, ‘being conformed to His death’; rejoicing with all the suffering that he went through. My! My! He sure had a good grasp of it—didn't he?

Verse 11: “If by any means I may attain unto the resurrection of the dead; not as though I have already received, or have already been perfected; but I am striving... [this is what we need to do on a daily basis; on a weekly basis] ...so that I may also

lay hold on that for which I also was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not count myself as having attained...” (vs 11-13). No one has it made—even the Apostle Paul didn't have it made.

I remember one man who claimed to be an apostle, and I was sitting in the Bible study when he said it—he said: ‘You know, I've been faithful for so long and I've overcome so much that Satan has no more interest in me.’ And guess what? BAM! Satan came and got him. Not like the Apostle Paul—he says ‘I haven't made it yet.’

“...but *this* one thing *I do*—... [this is what he's doing] ...forgetting the things that are behind... [you've got to forget the past; you've got to forget the sins; you repent of them, but you've got to put them away] ...and reaching forth to the things that are ahead” (v 13).

- eternal life
- spirit, glorious being
- son and daughter of God
- living in New Jerusalem
- seeing God the Father face-to-face

Verse 14: “**I press toward the goal** for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.... [Then he tells you how to be perfect]: ...So then, let as many as *be* perfect be of this mind.... [If you're striving with the love of God in you—and the Holy Spirit—you're perfect in God's eyes! Even with all your weakness! Isn't that marvelous? *That's great! That encourages me!*] (Then he gives this promise): ...And if *in* anything you are otherwise minded, God will reveal even this to you” (vs 14-15).

God is the One Who reveals the inner sins of your mind so that you can repent of them and get rid of them. Isn't that marvelous? **The graciousness of God leads you to repentance.** So when you have this inner struggle in overcoming, God is there revealing it so you can overcome. People in the world, without God's Spirit, don't have that same bell—they just don't! Nothing bothers them. Everything is just fine. Once in while someone with some conscience it would bother them; but that's a tremendous thing.

That's what the Apostle Peter is saying here, too. 2-Peter 3:14: “...be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless. And bear in mind that the longsuffering of our Lord *is* salvation... [that's what God wants through it all—through all the examples of everything] ...exactly as our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, also wrote to you; also, as in all his epistles, speaking in them concerning these things; in which are some things *that are* difficult to understand... [some of them are] ...which the ignorant also *twist and distort* the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction” (vs 14-16). So, if you don't properly put

it together, you're going to end up destroying yourself.]

Verse 17: “Now therefore, beloved, *since* you know this in advance, be guarding yourselves against *such practices*, lest you be led astray with the error of the lawless ones... [all of those that we read about in 2-Peter and Jude, to lead people astray.] ...*and* you fall from your own steadfastness; rather, be growing in *the* grace and *the* knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him *be* glory both now and into *the* day of eternity. AMEN” (vs 17-18).

So that's something!

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

- ✓ Exception: 1& 2-Peter, from *The Seven General Epistles* by Fred R. Coulter—author's translation

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- 1) 2 Peter 2:20-22
- 2) Jude 20-25
- 3) 2 Peter 2:2
- 4) John 14:6
- 5) Genesis 18:19
- 6) Psalm 25:9-10
- 7) Psalm 119:1, 27, 29-35
- 8) Proverbs 16:29-31
- 9) Romans 5:17
- 10) Proverbs 14:12
- 11) Proverbs 16:25
- 12) Romans 3:10-18
- 13) 1 Corinthians 12:31
- 14) Galatians 2:20-21
- 15) 2 Peter 3:1-2
- 16) Titus 1:15-16
- 17) Psalm 35:18:21-26
- 18) 2 Peter 3:3-4
- 19) Psalm 35:15-18
- 20) 2 Timothy 3:1-7
- 21) 2 Peter 3:3-5
- 22) Romans 1:18-20
- 23) 2 Peter 3:6-7
- 24) Hebrews 1:1-3, 10-12
- 25) 2 Peter 3:7-14
- 26) Philippians 3:7-15
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- Hebrews 6
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