

Joe Megacz - Peter's Final Message

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Peter's final message Brother Joe thank you, Brother Ron, and thank you, Brother Ed, for your prayer and thank you, Sister Rosemary, for your musical talents.

Sister Kathy and I would like to express our deep gratitude and appreciation to the Salem Bible Students for arranging this convention for your labors of love and also especially for the kitchen crew and their hard work in providing all the meals that we have so much enjoyed, and I would particularly like to thank we particularly Sister Kathy and I would like to thank Brother Lou and Sister Judy Garrison for their warm and generous hospitality. They have truly treated us like royalty, and if you want to hear a funny story, ask either Lew or Judy about the air mattress that swallowed Brother Joe.

Please wait until after I'm gone to ask him that story, if you don't mind. It does have a happy ending.

And lastly, as Brother Ron said yesterday when he introduced me for the convention themed Discourse, this is indeed the first time I have either attended or served at a Salem Bible Students convention. But I can assure you it will not be my last time. We have greatly enjoyed being here.

Earlier this year I prepared this talk as a theme text discourse at the Florida Bible Students Convention in Orlando last March. It seemed to be a lesson worth repeating, so I decided to give it again here today. The theme text at that convention was second Peter 3:14, and I began, as I usually do, by considering just the theme text itself, the sense of it, the parts of it, some of the key words and phrases, and I found a lot of good material in second Peter 3:14 for the core of a discourse. Then again, as I usually do, I looked at several verses preceding the theme text to see the flow of the passage and how the preceding verses lead up to the theme text and continue its message.

I found more good material in those preceding verses for a talk, and I felt confident now that I had enough material for the entire discourse. But then I decided to take a look at the verses following second Peter 3:14 and found even more good material that had to be included. So now I began to worry that one hour wouldn't be enough time for the material I was gathering, and then I really got into Second Peter. I couldn't stop myself from thinking, you know, I ought to go all the way back to the beginning of Second Peter and see how chapters one and two lead into Chapter three.

And then I couldn't even stop myself from going all the way to an examination of First Peter to see how His First Epistle leads us to His Second Epistle and brethren. It was a rich blessing in preparing this discourse the books of first and Second Peter are well worth the time for your personal study. So let's read Peter's final message in second Peter 3, 11, 18, and then we're going to step back to a brief discussion of how Peter's first first epistle and then chapters one and two of his second epistle set the stage for Peter's final message, second Peter 3:11-18. This first text, by the way, appears on your convention programs in the lower left panel at the bottom of our schedule for Friday Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

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Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace without spot and blameless and account and account, that the long suffering of our Lord is salvation, even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable, rest as they do also the other scriptures unto their own destruction. Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things from before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness, but grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory, both now and forever. Amen.

Keep the words of these verses in mind as the destination that we're traveling towards. As I briefly recap, first Peter and two Peter Chapters one and two, the theme of Peter's first General Epistle is suffering. Trials and temptations are essential to our salvation well known. First Peter 3, 7 says, that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. In chapter two of first Peter, the apostle recounts the trials and sufferings of Jesus and exhorts his readers, including ourselves, to follow him.

In chapter three of first Peter we find warnings against temptations of the adversary and his attacks on the unity of the body of Christ, trying to create divisions Amongst the brethren. First Peter 3, 8 says, finally, be ye all of one mind having compassion one of another Love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous. Chapter four, like chapter two, recounts our Lord's suffering and once again includes exhortations to follow Him. Chapter five, like chapter three, is a warning to resist temptations, this time temptations of the adversary along the lines of pride, and so we see in Peter's first general epistle this repeating alternating pattern of follow our Lord, resist the adversary, follow our Lord, resist the adversary.

Trials and temptations and sufferings are essential to you gaining your salvation.

That's all the time we have for First Peter. Now let's take a look at Second Peter. If the theme of one Peter is, as I said, suffering, trials and temptations are essential to our salvation, then I like to suggest that the theme of Second Peter is growth in grace and knowledge are also essential to our salvation, and Peter's recurring messages throughout Second Peter are exhortations to grow in Christlikeness as well as warnings to avoid false teachers and their false teachings. Let's take a look at some of the gems in Second Peter, chapters one and two.

Chapter one of two Peter includes the familiar exhortation to grow in Christlikeness by adding to our faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, and so forth in order to obtain an abundant entrance into the kingdom of heaven. Let's read that passage, 2 Peter 1, 5, 8, 10 and 11, and beside this giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue and to virtue knowledge and to knowledge temperance and to temperance patience and to patience godliness and to godliness brotherly kindness and to brotherly kindness charity or agape love. For if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. So here again you see how Peter is combining together these two main themes of his second epistle, growth in grace and in knowledge.

It continues, wherefore the rather brethren give diligence and we've heard this word diligence many times at this convention. If you've been listening in our convention theme text and also in Peter's final message, give diligence to make your calling and election sure. Win your crown, earn your salvation, for if you do these things, ye shall never fall for so an entrance shall be ministered unto

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you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It's interesting to note that immediately following this exhortation to growth in Christlikeness is a warning to avoid false teachers and their false teachings. 2nd Peter 1, 12, 16 wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth you know.

As a quick digression, let me interrupt myself. We often use this phrase, present truth. It's once again on your convention programs under what the Salem Bible students believe and hold dear. We sometimes use the phrase speaking of someone who knows the harvest message and believes it that he is established in the present truth. This Scripture is where that phrase comes from.

We don't often remember that or recognize it, but here is where we get that term, present truth or established in the present truth. The verses continue. Yea, I think it meet as long as I am in this tabernacle to stir you up by putting you in remembrance, knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle. Peter's telling the brethren he's going to die soon, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me. Moreover, I will endeavor that ye may be able, after my decease, to have these things always in remembrance.

For we have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His Majesty.

I like Peter's directness and forcefulness in this warning, putting it in my own words. He's saying, I have been careful to always teach you the truth, the unchanging, everlasting present truth, and I'm going to keep reminding you of that present truth as long as I live, as long as I am in this present tabernacle, and even after I'm dead, I. I want you to keep remembering all of the truth that I have taught you. Watch out for false teachers who will try to get you to believe their false teachings after I'm gone. Don't be tricked into believing their cunningly devised fables that contradict present truth.

Peter's warning was given directly to the disciples of his day at the beginning of the Gospel age. But I think his warning is even more important and applicable to us today than it was to them back then.

Chapter two of Peter's Second Epistle continues his warning against being deceived by false teachers and their false teachings. In particularly blunt language. I won't take the time to read any of it now. You can study it for yourself, and that brings us to Second Peter, chapter 3.

In Second Peter, chapter 3, verses 1 and 2, the apostle reemphasizes the point he's been making all along, namely, remember the truth, the truth that you have been taught by the Old Testament prophets as well as the truth you have been taught by all the apostles, who have as responsible stewards given you your understanding of the two salvations, the entire divine plan of the ages, the ransom, the prophecies of restitution, and so forth. Second Peter 3:1:2 says this second epistle, Beloved, I now write unto you in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance, that ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles, O the Lord and Savior.

Then in verse 3 of 2 Peter 3, Peter, guided by the Holy Spirit, I'm sure, prophesies directly to the saints living in the last days, the harvest of the gospel age. 2nd Peter 3, 3:4 Knowing this first that there shall come in the last days scoffers walking after their own lusts and saying, where is the promise of his coming or his presence? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.

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Here Peter warns all who have come to know that our Lord returned invisibly in 1874, that we would be challenged and even ridiculed for proclaiming his return, and so it has been since Brother Russell's day, when he first declared our Lord's invisible presence in verses 5 through 10, I won't read them. Peter continues this warning against challenges to our understanding of chronology and where we are in the stream of time by specifically mentioning the world that was the present evil world and the thousand year day of the Lord, and he concludes this section of his exhortation to the Church class at the end of the Gospel age with the declaration that the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night. It is not for everyone to discern his invisible presence, but it is for the faithful watchers whose eyes of understanding have been opened.

And Peter wants to stir up our pure minds by way of remembrance so that we are mindful of the words of truth we have been given, and in these verses I believe Peter is speaking not to all the saints of the Gospel age, but just those of the harvest and especially the late days of the harvest, especially to us in the last days of the end times, to those of us living in the year 2016.

Which brings us once again to where we started Peter's final message 2nd Peter 3:11-18 if I were to summarize the two main points of Peter's final message, they seem to be that as we see the present evil world crumbling first, how should we conduct ourselves outwardly to those who see us in response to the events that are causing such distress to the world in general? And second, how should we react inwardly to the events that are causing such distress to the world in general? In second Peter 3. 11 we read once again, seeing that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?

For a number of years now, many speakers have given discourses featuring this Scripture, and they typically reword the verse slightly to say, seeing then that all these things are being dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness? I'll follow that pattern. Now. Peter has already told us earlier in his writings, what manner of persons we who are seeing the present evil world dissolve before our eyes ought to be what manner of persons ought we to be? He says it in one word, parapoiesis.

That's the manner of persons we ought to be parapoiesis, and I'm sure you would all agree I see a lot of blank looks on your faces, as if I'm speaking Greek to you. Well, of course I am. Perhaps it would help if we read First Peter, Chapter two, verse nine, and Brother Jim touched on this Scripture briefly in his discourse this morning, 1st Peter 2:9 but ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood and holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

In this text, parapoiesis is the Greek word translated by the English word peculiar. That's the manner of persons we ought to be peculiar. Now if you look up the English word peculiar in a dictionary, the first definition is something like unusual, different, odd, or strange. But the word peculiar also has the sense of something owned or possessed by a person or thing, as in this laptop computer that I'm using is peculiar to me. I own it.

It's mine. We're going to explore both of these meanings of the word peculiar as it's translated from Peripoiesis. We'll spend a little more time on the first definition.

There's an excellent comment on this phrase, a peculiar people, which also appears in Titus 2:14 in the May 20th manna, and in this comment, once again, the meaning of the word peculiar is taken as the first meaning meaning that I mentioned unusual, different, odd, or strange. The May 20 Mana comment says a peculiar people. Not peculiar in dress, nor in manners, nor in language, nor

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in foolish senseless forms and idiosyncrasies, but peculiar in that it is separate from the world and the spirit of the world. It has the spirit of Christ, a spirit of full consecration to the Lord, and separateness from the world and its selfish aim.

It is peculiar in that its adherence to the word of the Lord is its only law. It is peculiar in that it rejects worldly wisdom when it conflicts with the Divine revelation. It is peculiar in that it is in the world, but not of the world. It is peculiar in that it has a decided faith and acts in harmony with its faith and with zeal. It is peculiar in that it is self sacrificing and knows no will but the will of its king.

It is peculiar in that it knows the truth and is able to give a reason for the hope within, while others merely speculate and wonder and doubt.

This manna comment could be a discourse in itself, and I'd like to take some time to examine it phrase by phrase. The comment begins with the words a peculiar people. Not peculiar in dress, nor in manners, nor in language, nor in foolish, senseless forms and idiosyncrasies, but peculiar in that it is separate from the world and the spirit of the world.

What do you suppose Pastor Russell meant when he said we should not be peculiar in dress, men, manners, or language? Perhaps he had in mind some of the religious groups of his day, such as the Amish, who were of noble character and high moral standards based on their appreciation of God's principles as expressed in His Word. But the peculiar dress, language, and mannerisms of those good people estranged them and separated them from the rest of the people without necessarily lifting them up closer to God or enabling them to find a hearing ear amongst those to whom they would like to preach the Gospel because their strangeness of dress served as a barrier. I think that's the essence of the pastor's first sentence. Scriptural peculiarity not only separates one from the world, but should also elevate one toward God and yet allow one to be a witness to the truth to those who have a hearing ear.

Now, while our dress, language, and manners are not what should distinguish us from the world, yet our dress, language, and manners should be held to the highest standards of decorum and godliness. Our dress should be neither severe in its plainness nor nor provocative in its ostentation, but average, moderate, dignified. Likewise, when it says our language and manners are not what makes us peculiar, it doesn't mean then that we should swear and use crude language and be rude like the rest of the world so as to fit in with them. No, rather, our speech and mannerisms are ways of expressing ourselves and conducting Ourselves should be as common and as natural as possible, while still being as godly as possible. Again, true peculiarity, scriptural peculiarity not only makes us different and separates us from the world, but it also lifts us closer to God.

Are you peculiar?

Let's move on to the next part of the manna comment. But peculiar in that it is separate from the world and the Spirit of the world. It has the Spirit of Christ, a spirit of full consecration to the Lord, and separateness from the world and its selfish aims. What is peculiar about the people of God? They are not selfish like the world, but rather self sacrificing like Jesus.

And in this characteristic moderation is not the goal. Our goal is to be as emptied of selfishness and self will as possible, while also being filled with the Spirit of Christ and God's will as possible. It is not enough to only be emptied of selfishness and self will, for that would leave us with a void in our characters, a lack of guiding principles and motivation, and then subject to whatever influences may come upon us. We must also be filled with the Spirit of Christ and the Holy Spirit of God.

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Are you peculiar?

The next part of the May 20 manna comment says it is peculiar in its adherence to the Word of the Lord as its only law. Now, that doesn't mean that we can disregard and break the laws of man where there is no violation of our conscience simply because we shouldn't be able to have to follow those laws. No, in fact, we should go to great lengths to demonstrate our willingness to obey the just laws of men. Our peculiarity in this regard comes from our obedience to an even higher and more restrictive law regarding the laws of the land. We make it our business to know what the laws say so that we will pay our taxes on time and water our grass on the right day.

And in Illinois we have to turn our headlights on whenever it's raining and we use our windshield wipers. I don't know if that's the law here in Oregon, but that's the law in Illinois regarding the laws of God. How much more should we make it our urgent business to know what God's laws say? And the way to do that is to read, study, understand and apply. Read, study, understand and apply.

Our peculiarity comes from our obedience to an even higher and more restrictive law than the laws of men, which we also obey where there is no conflict with the higher law.

Are you peculiar?

The manna comment continues. It is peculiar in that it rejects worldly wisdom when it conflicts with the divine revelation. Now this conflict is not merely historical, such as the way modern archaeologists contradict Brother Russell's chronology. Nor is this conflict merely scientific, the way evolution contradicts the Bible account of creation. There is also a moral conflict.

Worldly wisdom is based on either error or selfishness. The wisdom of the world says, if nobody catches you when you do something wrong, then you didn't do something wrong. The divine revelation says, for there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, neither hid that shall not be known. Luke 12:2 the wisdom of the world says, do unto others before they have a chance to do it unto you. The divine revelation says, do good unto all men as you have opportunity.

Galatians 6:10 the wisdom of the world says, it's okay to lie, cheat, or steal in the little things. Just don't go too far. Do the right thing in larger matters when it counts, or when somebody is watching you. The divine revelation says, he that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much Luke 16:10 our peculiarity comes from adhering to the principles of divine wisdom, even when especially when they conflict with the conventional wisdom of the world, which is based on the spirit of me.

First Are you peculiar?

The next sentence of the May 20th manna comment reads, it is peculiar in that it is in the world, but not of the world, and these words remind me of another familiar manna comment. The Christian in the world is like a ship in the ocean. You can probably say the rest the ship is safe in the ocean as long as the ocean is not in the ship. The manna Comment from August 3rd I'm going to skip over the next sentence in the May 20 manna comment, which speaks of faith and zeal and save it for last.

So the following sentence that we'll consider then reads, it is peculiar in that it is self sacrificing and knows no will but the will of its king. We spoke before about the spirit of self sacrifice and how it is the opposite of the spirit of selfishness, the Spirit of the world let's touch briefly on the will of our king in 1 Thessalonians 4:3. Paul writes, for this is the will of God, even your sanctification. God's design. His will for us is that we be set apart to him and his service.

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Our sanctification is a lifelong process that continues throughout our course until our character is fully developed and ripened and crystallized.

The last sentence of the manna comment, other than the sentence I skipped, says, it is peculiar in that it knows the truth and is able to give a reason for the hope within, while others merely speculate, wonder and doubt, and this is an important aspect of our peculiarity. You know, I think we all know someone at work or someone who lives down the block or someone in school, and they are good people. They are good people. They have to some extent a spirit of self sacrifice and they desire to do God's will.

They seem to fit the description of the peculiar people, but they are not Bible students, nor are they in the truth, as we say. Well, what about them? Are they of the peculiar people or are they not? Well, I'd like to suggest that the answer is that knowledge of the truth is an important element of our peculiarity. Without it, one can only achieve half of the Christlike development required of us.

As Peter said in his closing exhortation, we read it shortly ago, the very last verse of his second general epistle, second Peter 3:18 grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I'll talk more about this verse at the very end of our discourse.

Are you peculiar?

Let's conclude our consideration of the May 20th manna comment with the sentence I skipped over earlier. It says it is peculiar in that it has a decided faith and acts in harmony with its faith and with zeal. I held this point for last because faith must be built on the knowledge we just talked about. Those who speculate, wonder, and doubt have no foundation upon which to build a faith structure. Or if the foundation is comprised of error, not truth, then the structure built upon it will be blind credulity, not faith, and the building will not survive.

And this faith is not a mere mental accomplishment or exercise. What you know, or how much you know, or how quickly you can recall it. This faith prompts us to action. Good works with zeal. Titus 2:14 and in first John 5:4 the apostle wrote, and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith.

Along the lines of this scripture, Pastor Russell wrote on reprint page 1719 and 1720 the victory or conquering power that energizes our whole being to patient endurance of tribulation, even unto the end, is our faith. Faith is knowledge applied, assimilated, appropriated, made, a part of our habit of thought, a basis for our actions, and a spur to all our energies. Such a faith is the overcoming power which all must have who would run successfully the race for the prize of our high calling. To be a conquering power, faith must go deeper than the head it must go into the heart. Then faith will impel us to action, to works which clearly manifest our faith.

A mere intellectual assent to the truth of God that does not lead to activity in his service is not faith and can never overcome the world.

This, then, is the quintessential characteristic of God's peculiar people Are you peculiar?

I said before that the English word peculiar has two meanings. The more common meaning is different, unusual, odd, or strange. The other less common meaning is owned or possessed, belonging to someone or something. So let's spend just a few moments considering the Greek word translated peculiar and see how it adds to what we have been saying about God's peculiar

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people. The Greek word I mentioned before, you'll recall in 1st Peter 2.

9, is Strong's 4047 Parapoiesis, which means, by definition, acquisition, both the act of acquiring and the thing acquired. By extension, this word means preservation, and the word is translated purchased, purchased, possession, and saving. In addition to being translated peculiar, some translations of First Peter 2. 9 Render this phrase a people for God's own possession or a purchased possession, and so the thought of a people for God's own possession signifies a class redeemed ahead of the rest of mankind from the just penalty of death imposed upon Adam and the entire human race.

The merit of the ransom sacrifice is applied on behalf of the church class now in the gospel age, to give us the righteous reckoned, perfect standing before God that we need in order to enter into a covenant by sacrifice with him, and so we are a people for God's own possession, redeemed and purchased, justified and sanctified, separate from and different from the world of mankind. We are a unique and peculiar people.

Verse 10 of 1 Peter 2 amplifies this aspect of our peculiarity in being redeemed ahead of the World of Mankind 1st Peter 2:10 which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God, which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. So we are not only a peculiar people, we are not only a purchased people for God's own possession, we are also a people for a purpose. What purpose? Backing up one verse to verse nine. Again it says in the diatol that you may declare the perfections of him who called you from darkness into his wonderful light.

Are you fulfilling your purpose as a purchased possession of God?

And there is more to the purpose of this people, more than simply showing forth the praises of God, as the King James translates 1 Peter 2. 9 We are shining examples of righteousness and justice in a dark and evil world. We are filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ adding our suffering now which will qualify us for a place in the kingdom when we reign as kings and priests.

Are you peculiar?

One final aspect of our being peculiar or different from the world, which Brother Russell didn't mention in that May 20th manna comment I read earlier because I don't think it was much of a factor in his day, is not getting embroiled in the political discussion of our day. You know, everyone in the world likes to bash the other side, the other candidate, the other political party, especially this year with the presidential election drawing near. Brethren, let's leave those discussions to the world. Our reply when others try to draw us into a complaint about how bad shape our country is in, or how bad the economy is in, or how bad the world is in and whose fault it is, our reply should always be, that's why the world needs God's kingdom. Let me tell you about it.

Have you got a few hours?

Well, that's all I have to say about parapoiesis, the word again translated peculiar. But I want to digress just a minute to share a brief, humorous story with you. I've given this discourse twice now, on two occasions in two different places, and after one of the times I gave it, a dear sister came up to me. I won't tell you who she was or where this happened, but a dear sister came up to me and she wanted to express her appreciation for the thoughts that I had presented and the analysis of Second Peter that I gave, and she said to me, brother Joe, I particularly liked your thoughts about porpoises.

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So if you ever have trouble remembering that strange Greek word, just imagine Flipper jumping through the water and it might come back to you. Parapoesis in 2 Peter 3, 12, 13 Peter now shifts from describing what manner of persons we ought to be outwardly a peculiar people, to how we should react inwardly to the turmoil in the world around us. Let's read 2 Peter 3:12, 13 looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

Now in these verses we are encouraged to do what many of us do naturally, and have done for many years. We lift our vision up beyond the fiery, dissolving heavens and earth, and look instead toward the future kingdom, the new heavens and the new earth, the silver lining behind the clouds of trouble, and I think it's important to note that while some in the world, hope, and even pray for a better future, yet they have no basis or foundation for their hope. We who understand the truth of the three worlds which Peter mentioned in verses 5 to 7 have a hope built on the promises of God, as Peter called it in verse 13. Further, in verse 9, which I skipped over previously, Peter declares that God is not slack concerning his promise.

What promise? That the day of the Lord, the kingdom on earth wherein dwelleth righteousness will come after the heavens and earth which are now are burned up. That's what we look for. That's what we see the kingdom. We see it with the eye of faith, while others around us can only wonder and hope, with hearts failing them for fear for looking after the things which are coming upon the earth, as our Lord prophesied in Luke 21:26.

Continuing on in verse 14 of 2nd Peter 3 wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent. There's that word again. We've heard it so many times at this convention that ye may be found of him in peace without spot and blameless. Here Peter shifts back to his other theme in this closing passage, how we should act outwardly in these last days of trouble on the earth, and he says we should be diligent to be three things in peace without spot and blameless.

And being diligent means a lifelong effort, daily, even hourly, sometimes minute by minute. It doesn't come easy. You have to work at being at peace without spot and blameless.

Now there are so many wonderful and familiar scriptures which speak of our peace that if I asked you to quote some of them, it could take easily the rest of our hour and much more. I have time to mention only one of my favorite scriptures on peace, Isaiah 26, chapter 3 Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee.

You already know that I like to find manna comments which are discourses in themselves, and there are quite a number of them in our manna, as I did with the one on a peculiar People, and there's a similar gem thought on this scripture in the July 17 manna. The July 17 manna. It says, this is not worldly peace, not the peace of indifference, not the peace of sloth, not the peace of self indulgence, not the peace of fatalism. But it is the peace of Christ, my peace.

Looking back, we can see that the Master preserved his peace with God under all conditions. It is a peace which implicitly trusts to the Divine wisdom, love, justice, and power a peace which remembers the gracious promise made to the Lord's faithful, that nothing shall by any means hurt his faithful, and that all things shall work together for good to them that love God. This peace can accept by faith whatever Divine providence permits, and can look through its tears with joyful expectancy for the ultimate blessings which the Master has promised, and of which the present peace and joy are merely foretastes.

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I won't take time now to expand upon that mana comment. Other brethren have given far more excellent discourses on our peace than I could. So let's now consider the other two of the three things that Peter said we should be Spotless or without spot and blameless. At first reading, those two might sound like they're the same. If you're spotless, then you're blameless, aren't you?

Well, I think there is a fine distinction between them, and it is a distinction worth noting. Without spot is probably the easier of the two exhortations to understand. It means to conduct ourselves according to the highest standards of righteousness, and Peter has been exhorting his readers to do this all throughout the both of his general epistles. Now we cannot be perfect or truly spotless, and first John tells us that when we sin we have an advocate, but we must nonetheless be examples of the believers to them that are without in all righteous conduct peculiar. As I said before, I'd like to suggest that blameless has a slightly different meaning, namely, above reproach, so that even if others wanted to say something negative about us, they couldn't even make up a lie falsely derogatory, that would be credible to those to whom this lie might be told about us.

Paul in 1st Timothy 3. 7 said, Elders must have a good report of them that are without so too should it be with all of us, not merely just the elders. We should strive to be blameless from even false charges against our character from the world.

Verse 15 Once again, an account that the long suffering of our Lord is salvation, even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you. That expression, the long suffering of our Lord is salvation, is worthy of note because it repeats the wording in verse 9 which I mentioned briefly before. Let's read that now. 2nd Peter 3. 9 the Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, but is long suffering to us ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Now recall once again the overall theme of both of Peter's general epistles. Your own personal salvation and how to make your calling and election sure. That is the overall theme of both of Peter's general epistles, your own personal salvation and how to make your calling and election sure. Here in these verses, Peter says, the Lord will be patient with you far beyond what you deserve and then some he wants all of us to have that abundant entrance into the kingdom. So brethren, never ever think for a moment that you have failed so badly in fulfilling your consecration vow that there is no longer any hope for you.

Don't let yourself become so discouraged. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, but is long suffering to us ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Peter said it, Paul wrote it, and our Lord guaranteed it. Be strengthened by these words when you fall.

I also like Peter's tender statement in these verses. Our beloved brother Paul Remember that Peter and Paul had a bit of a disagreement, to put it mildly, and Paul's side of the story is given in Galatians 2:11-14 paraphrasing Paul says that Peter acted one way when he was with the Jews and acted a different way when he was with the Gentiles. So Paul got in Peter's face and called him out on it. Peter, to his credit, received Paul's correction properly and took no offense.

I think the lesson for us is so should we both give correction properly to our beloved brethren when it is necessary, and so should we receive correction properly when it is given to us from our beloved brethren.

Joe Megacz - Peter's Final Message

Verses 16 and 17 of 2 Peter 3 repeat Peter's warning given several times now, to not be led away from the truth you have been taught. I'll paraphrase again. Peter says, some aspects of the truth taught so carefully by Paul, line upon line, precept upon precept, are still hard to understand. You have to spend the time and the brain power to understand and master some of these deeper doctrines of the truth.

Some people who don't understand the truth themselves will try to tell you that truth is error. Don't listen to them, they don't know what they're talking about. Be steadfast in the knowledge of the harvest truth, the present truth that you have been given.

Peter's second Epistle ends with these words repeating the theme he has been striking throughout his letter to the brethren of his day, as well as to us in our day, but grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Here Peter says, don't just hold on to what you have by way of Christlikeness, but go on to evermore increase a step of grace and a step of knowledge. Grace and knowledge alternately gained, increase the growth rate of the other. More knowledge makes one see the need for growth in the fruits and graces of a Christlike character. Growth in grace, particularly the graces of meekness, humility, reverence, and teachableness, prepare one to see the need for more knowledge and study of the present truth that we have been given.

As we take one final look back upon the Apostle Peter's two general epistles, we see in his writings the example of Peter's consecration and a mirror of his own life. Peter suffered and was tried and was tempted, but stayed on the way to his heavenly salvation despite a few missteps, and so he wrote about that in first Peter, very candidly and openly Peter grew in grace and in knowledge as a result of his experiences, and so he wrote about that in second Peter, and we are confident Peter obtained the salvation that he sought and that he desired for each one of us in his writings.

Brethren, may we also understand that suffering, trials, and temptations are essential to our salvation, and may we, as Peter did, patiently bear them and pick ourselves up again when we fall, as Peter did. May we also recognize, as Peter did, that growth in grace and steadfastness in present truth are essential to our salvation, and may we pass whatever tests the Lord permits to come upon us to increase the fruitage of our growth in grace and in knowledge, and may the Lord add his blessing.