

Notes on the Greek New Testament Day 331 – November 27th – 2 Peter 1:1-21

Introduction to 2 Peter

The Greek of 2 Peter

Comparing the language of 1 and 2 Peter, Green notes, "There is a very great stylistic difference between these two letters. The Greek of 1 Peter is polished, cultured, dignified; it is among the best in the New Testament. The Greek of 2 Peter is grandiose; it is rather like baroque art, almost vulgar in its pretentiousness and effusiveness. Pedantic words (such as *ῥοιζηδον*) and cumbersome phrases (such as *ὑπερογκα ματαιοτηος φθεγγομενοι*) abound. The rich variety of connecting particles, a feature of 1 Peter, has almost disappeared. Many of 1 Peter's favourite words (such as *ἀγιαζειν*, *ἐλπις*, *κληρονομα*) are also missing, while others (as *ἐπακολουθεω*, *μαρτυς*) are replaced by synonyms in 2 Peter. When we find that a number of words in 2 Peter occur elsewhere only in Homer, and that the author has a curious tendency to fall into iambic rhythm (e.g. 2:1,3,4), and to use language redolent of the pagan mystery cults (such as *σωτηρ*, *ἐπιγνωσις*, *θεια φυσις*, *ἀρετη*, to look no further than the first few verses), then it is not hard to sympathise with Jerome's reluctance to ascribe both Epistles to the same hand." Green says that "It is now clear that there was a definite Asiatic style of writing, with a florid, verbose type of diction verging on the bizarre, which was a far cry from the canons of classical simplicity." 2 Peter is an example of this style.

Bauckham comments similarly on the language of the letter, commenting that it has proportionately more *hapax legomena* (57, 32 of which also do not occur in the LXX) than any other book in the NT.

Authorship

The authenticity of 2 Peter has often been questioned. The arguments are considered in detail by Michael Green in the introduction to his commentary and also in his monograph *2 Peter Reconsidered*. Green argues that the letter does owe its origin to the apostle Peter. He considers that differences in style between 1 and 2 Peter owe their origin to Peter having used different secretaries (amanuenses) in the production of the letters.

Bauckham considers that the letter was not written by Peter but by one who had assisted Peter during his final days at Rome and who felt that he was able to speak authoritatively on behalf of the dead apostle. In reality it is not a personal letter but expresses the pastoral concern of the church in Rome for churches elsewhere in the Empire. The letter is in the form of a 'testament': its concerns are expressed as if they were the final words of the Apostle Peter. Bauckham comments, "The pseudepigraphal device is ... not a fraudulent means of claiming apostolic authority, but embodies a claim to be a faithful mediator of the apostolic message. Recognising the canonicity of 2 Peter means recognising the validity of that claim." Bauckham considers that the letter was written between 80 and 90 AD – 3:4 reflecting the crisis caused by the death of the apostles.

The Situation Addressed

2 Peter seems to have been written to a similar audience to that of the first letter, but at a later date. The chief problems facing the churches seem no longer to be the threat of persecution but rather of false teachers who, according to Bauckham were not Gnostic but rather opposed the eschatological teaching of the apostles.

Bauckham suggests that these teachers were schooling disciples (2:1-3a, 14, 18). Their teaching was marked by eschatological scepticism: there was to be no expectation of eschatological judgment, no divine intervention to eliminate evil and bring about a world of righteousness. These teachers had a rationalistic view of the world.

They claimed that the apostles had *invented* the idea of the Parousia. Old Testament passages that seemed to point to such a decisive intervention by God arose from the prophets' misguided attempts to interpret dreams and visions (1:20-21a).

By their teaching these folk claimed to be freeing people from the fear of judgment (2:19a). They argued that petty moral constraints could be ignored. Instead, they accommodated to pagan society, aiming "to disencumber Christianity of its eschatology and its ethical rigorism, which seemed to them an embarrassment in their cultural environment." In making 'freedom' their catchword they may have appealed to Paul's teaching on justification by faith and on Christian freedom.

Relationship to Jude

There is a clear relationship between 2 Peter and Jude. "Of the twenty-five verses in Jude no less than fifteen appear, in whole or in part, in 2 Peter." Having considered the arguments for 2 Peter's dependence upon Jude or Jude's on 2 Peter, Green concludes with E I Robson and Bo Reike that both letters draw upon a common source, perhaps a sermon pattern formulated to resist seducers of the church. Donald Guthrie, in his *Introduction to the New Testament* comes to a similar conclusion based upon statistical analysis of the words in the common verses.

Bauckham considers 2 Peter dependent upon Jude. He thinks that the writer omitted elements that were not relevant to his argument or which he felt less comfortable about – such as the allusions to Jewish Pseudepigrapha (such as *Enoch*).

Structure

Bauckham provides the following outline of the structure of 2 Peter, seeing it primarily as response to the false teachers and defence of apostolic teaching:

1:1–2	Address and Salutation
1:3–11	Theme: A Summary of Peter's Message
1:12–15	Occasion: Peter's Testament
1:16–18	Reply to Objection 1: (a) Apostolic Eyewitness
1:19	Reply to Objection 1: (b) The Value of OT Prophecy
1:20–21	Reply to Objection 2: The Inspiration of OT Prophecy
2:1–3a	Peter's Prediction of False Teachers
2:3b–10a	Reply to Objection 3: The Certainty of Judgment
2:10b–22	Denunciation of the False Teachers
3:1–4	Peter's Prediction of Scoffers (including Objection 4: v 4)
3:5–7	Reply to Objection 4: (a) The Sovereignty of God's Word
3:8–10	Reply to Objection 4: (b) The Forbearance of the Lord
3:11–16	Exhortation
3:17–18	Conclusion

Works frequently referenced in these notes on 2 Peter

Bauckham, R. J.	<i>Word Biblical Commentary: Vol 50: Jude, 2 Peter</i> , Dallas, Word, 1998
Green, Michael	<i>2 Peter and Jude (Tyndale Commentary)</i> , Leicester, IVP, 1968

Verse 1

Συμεὼν Πέτρος δοῦλος καὶ ἀπόστολος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῖς ἰσότημον ἡμῖν λαχοῦσιν πίστιν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν καὶ σωτήρος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ·

Many MSS have Σίμων, 'Simon,' & A K P. *al* have Συμεων, 'Simeon.' Probably the latter is original and has been corrected to the more usual Σίμων.

Bauckham, who argues the letter was not written by the apostle (see above), comments, "The form Συμεων may reflect the fact that the writer was an associate of Peter's who belonged to Peter's circle in Rome. Because that circle included Jewish Christian leaders (such as Mark and Silvanus) who had known Peter in Palestine the name Συμεων which was current in Palestinian Christian circles continued to be used in the Roman Petrine circle."

δουλος, ου m slave, servant

There is no identifying description of those to whom the letter is written. 3:1 suggests the letter was written to the same Christians as 1 Peter.

ἰσότημος, ου equally valuable, of the same kind, of equal privilege

A political word meaning, 'of equal standing'. This letter was written to Gentiles who are at no disadvantage compared with Jews to whom the message of the gospel first came. The greatest apostle and the humblest Christian are of equal standing. Bauckham comments, "The faith of these later believers is not inferior to that of the apostles (cf. John 20:29 for a similar thought from the same period.)"

λαχοῦσιν Verb, aor act ptc, m & n dat pl
λαγχανω receive, be given

Emphasises the grace of God – faith is God's gift.

πιστις, εως f faith, trust, belief
δικαιοσυνη, ης f righteousness

Cf. Rom 1:17. "They did not obtain it through their own efforts or strength, but through God's favour alone." Calvin.

Bauckham suggests that πίστιν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ should be taken "to refer to the fairness and lack of favoritism which gives equal privilege to all Christians."

σωτηρ, ηρος m saviour

"The phrase *God and our Saviour Jesus Christ* raises the question whether Peter is distinguishing God and Christ or is in fact calling Jesus God. From the grammatical aspect, the two nouns are bound together in Greek by a single article, which strongly suggests that a single Person is meant. As Bigg points out, 'It is hardly open for anyone to translate 1 Peter 1:3 ὁ θεος και πατηρ by "the God and Father", and yet here decline to translate ὁ θεος και σωτηρ by "the God and Saviour"... Probably, therefore, the author is calling Jesus God here.'" Green.

Bauckham comments, "The other title here given to Jesus, σωτήρ ('Saviour'), is found only sixteen times as a Christological title in the NT (Luke 2:11; John 4:42; Acts 5:31; 13:23; Eph 5:23; Phil 3:20; 1 Jn. 4:14; four times in the Pastorals: 2 Tim 1:10; Titus 1:4; 2:13; 3:6; five times in 2 Peter: 1:1, 11; 2:20; 3:2, 18). In later writings it becomes rather more ... and from the mid-second century onward very common. The term was used of God in Judaism and occasionally in early Christianity ... and probably its application to Jesus derived originally from this Jewish usage; early Christians saw Jesus as the one who exercised the divine function of salvation. Its increasing popularity in Christian usage, however, will have been due to its great familiarity as a pagan religious term: applied to the Hellenistic savior-gods and divine rulers, especially in the cult of the Caesars (*TDNT* 7, 1004–12). Our author's predilection for the title may be another sign of his willingness to use the religious vocabulary of his Hellenistic environment to communicate the gospel meaningfully to Gentile converts."

Verse 2

χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη πληθυνθεῖ ἐν ἐπιγνώσει τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν.

εἰρηνη, ης f see last verse of 1 Peter
πληθυνθεῖ Verb, aor pass optative, 3 s
πληθυνω increase, multiply
ἐπιγνωσις, εως f knowledge

"τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ Ἰησοῦ is omitted by P Ψ *al* and this shorter reading is preferred by Spitta, Bigg, Chaine, and Zahn... But it can be explained as a correction to harmonize with (a) the references to a single divine person in vv 1 and 3a, (b) the writer's normal use of ἐπιγνωσις with Christ alone as the object (1:3, 8; 2:20)." Bauckham.

Knowledge of God and of Christ (see v.3) is a key theme of this letter. Michael Green thinks that the letter may have been written to oppose false teachers who emphasised knowledge – proto-Gnostic type teaching. "Knowledge may have been a catch-phrase of theirs which Peter takes up and fills with authentic Christian content. True knowledge of God and Christ produces grace and peace in the life; what is more, it produces holiness (v.3). The whole New Testament unites in denouncing a profession of faith which makes no difference in behaviour."

2 Peter's use of ἐπιγνώσις rather than γνώσις is deliberate, it is inceptive in force, the knowledge they have come into, and emphasises "the decisive knowledge of God which is implied in conversion to the Christian religion." Bultmann.

Verse 3

Ὡς πάντα ἡμῖν τῆς θείας δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ τὰ πρὸς ζωὴν καὶ εὐσεβειαν δεδωρημένης διὰ τῆς ἐπιγνώσεως τοῦ καλέσαντος ἡμᾶς ἰδίᾳ δόξῃ καὶ ἀρετῇ.

"The punctuation of these verses [2-4] is a puzzle. Either, we may put a comma after verse 2, in which case verses 3 and 4 explain the greeting. Grace and peace are multiplied in knowing Him because God has given us all we need. Or we may put a full stop after verse 2. There is then no main verb in the sentence. Unless, therefore, the *that* (4) represents an old use of the imperative 'see that you become', we should regard the sentence as an anacoluthon; Peter began his sentence but never ended it grammatically." Green.

The majority of commentators seem to prefer a close link with v. 2, though some see vv 3-4 as a protasis, to which the corresponding apodosis is found in vv 5-7.

θειος, α, ον divine

τῆς θείας δυνάμεως is a Hellenistic phrase rather than a Semitic circumlocution. αὐτοῦ most probably refers to Jesus as the nearest antecedent.

ζωη, ης f life

εὐσεβεια, ας f godliness, godly life

'everything necessary to a godly life'

δεδωρημένης Verb, perf pass ptc, f gen s
δωρεομαι give, bestow upon

The divine call is the ground of Peter's appeal to holy living.

ἰδιος, α, ον one's own

Not clear whether this refers to Jesus or to the Father. Green thinks the former.

δοξα, ης f glory

ἀρετη, ης f moral excellence, goodness

The datives are instrumental, it was all of God's own doing.

ἰδίᾳ δόξῃ καὶ ἀρετῇ (x A C P. *al*) is clearly preferable to διὰ δόξης καὶ ἀρετῆς (P⁷² B K L *al*).

Verse 4

δι' ὧν τὰ τίμια καὶ μέγιστα ἡμῖν ἐπαγγέλματα δεδωρηται, ἵνα διὰ τούτων γένησθε θείας κοινωνοὶ φύσεως, ἀποφυγόντες τῆς ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἐν ἐπιθυμίᾳ φθορᾶς.

τιμιος, α, ον precious, valuable

μέγιστος, η, ον very great

The order of the adjectives varies in the MSS. Mayor and Chaine prefer τίμια καὶ μέγιστα (P⁷² x B K L *al*) on the grounds that normal Greek style would place the superlative second (cf. also Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 699–700), but this supplies a motive for scribal correction, and so the harder reading μέγιστα καὶ τίμια (A C P. Ψ *al*) may be original." Bauckham.

ἐπαγγέλμα, τος n promise

For such promises see 3:4, 9, 13; cf. 1:11, 16, 19. "The adjectives no doubt apply to the promises because of the great things that they promise." Bauckham.

δεδωρηται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s

δωρεομαι

γένησθε Verb, aor midd depo subj, 2 pl

γινομαι

θειος, α, ον see v.3

κοινωνος, ου m partner, sharer

φυσις, εως f nature

The divine nature is the divine holiness. Peter speaks not of mystical unity but of coming to bear the moral image of God.

ἀποφυγόντες Verb, aor act ptc, m nom pl

ἀποφευγω escape

ἐπιθυμια, ας f desire, longing, lust

"By *the world* Peter means society alienated from God by rebellion (2:20 cf. 1 Jn 2:15-17; 5:19). We become *partakers of the divine nature* only after we have *escaped* or turned our backs on (note the decisiveness of the aorist participle) that attitude (cf. Jas 1:21)...

The ancient world was haunted by the conception of φθορα, corruption. The transitoriness of life, the pointlessness of it all, oppressed many of the best thinkers of antiquity (as it does today). Peter tells them that there is a way of escape – through Jesus Christ." Green.

φθορα, ας f decay, corruption, depravity

It is in Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, that we have already in part, and shall have fully hereafter (cf. 3:13) escaped the corruption and decay of this present age. As Bauckham comments, "The Greek aspiration for immortality was not simply denied but taken up and critically fulfilled by the gospel of the resurrection."

Verses 3-4 Postscript

Here it is worth quoting from Michael Green's summary of vv 3-4. "What contrasts these verses contain! *Corruption* and *life and godliness*; *lust* and *knowledge of him that hath called us*. Like Paul, Peter begins with the theological indicative. They are in God's family; they have left the world; they possess precious promises; they know Christ. This is the basis for his ethical imperative, which comes so strongly in the succeeding verses. They must become in practice what they already are in God's sight. "These two verses abound in rare and daring words. Peter is very subtly using language uncommon in the New Testament but full of meaning in the pagan world, as we know from the Carian inscription. The false teachers laid emphasis on knowledge; so Peter stresses that the object of knowledge in the Christian life is the Lord who calls men. They thought that knowledge dispensed with the need for morality, so Peter emphasises two words common in pagan circles for ethical endeavour, *eusebia* (*godliness*) and *arete* (*virtue*). They appear to have thought that holiness of living was impossible (see 2:19,20), so Peter speaks to them of the *divine power*, a Hebrew periphrasis for God. Rival schoolmen asserted that you escaped from the toils of *corruption* (*phthora*) by becoming *partakers of the divine nature* either by *nomos* ('lawkeeping') or by *phusis* ('nature'). Peter takes up their language, and replies that it is by sheer grace. Did the false teachers, Gnostic-wise, suggest that their adherents became more godlike as they escaped the trammels of the material world? Far from it says Peter. Participation in the divine nature is the starting point, not the goal, of Christian living. He writes to those who have *escaped* from the seductive allegiance to society at odds with God."

Verses 5-8

These verses are modelled on the Stoic προκοπη, the path of moral excellence (cf. Rom 5:3-5). Michael Green calls this section "The ladder of faith". All of these qualities are seen perfectly in the Lord Jesus. We are to practice, one by one, the facets of character that make up the loveliness of Christ.

Verse 5

και αὐτὸ τοῦτο δὲ σπουδὴν πᾶσαν
παρεισενέγκαντες ἐπιχορηγήσατε ἐν τῇ πίστει
ὑμῶν τὴν ἀρετὴν, ἐν δὲ τῇ ἀρετῇ τὴν γνῶσιν,

και αὐτο τουτο 'for this very reason'. "Because of our new birth and the precious promises and the divine power offered us in Christ we cannot sit back and rest content with 'faith' (cf. Jas 2:20)... There is enough truth to hurt in Moffatt's quotation of a cynic's description of Christian experience as an 'initial spasm followed by chronic inertia'. If this danger is to be avoided, the Christian must always be adding to his faith." Green.

σπουδῆ, ης f earnestness, diligence,
eagerness, zeal, haste
παρεισενέγκαντες Verb, aor act ptc, m nom pl
παρεισφερω exert (σπουδην πασαν π. do
one's best)

These virtues do not grow automatically; they must be actively pursued.

ἐπιχορηγήσατε Verb, aor act imperat, 2 pl
ἐπιχορηγεω supply, provide; ἐ. ἐν add to

Supply in abundance, supply quality after quality. The phrase can be translated, 'by means of your faith supply virtue.' All the following qualities proceed from faith and each proceeds from the former. Bauckham comments, "By representing faith as the root of all the virtues, the writer of 2 Peter is illustrating what he said in v 3: that Christ 'has bestowed on us everything necessary for a godly life, through the knowledge of himself. That knowledge of Christ is received by faith. It should also be noticed that, although the list of virtues includes terms highly characteristic of Hellenistic ethics, the whole list is given a specifically Christian character by the position of faith at the head of the list."

ἀρετῇ, ης f see v.3

A rare word in Biblical Greek, common in non-Biblical. Means the excellent or proper fulfilment of a thing. The Christian is to become all that a man/woman was intended to be – becoming like Christ cf. v.3.

γνῶσις, εως f knowledge, understanding

Meaning 'sagacity'. Bauckham says it is "the wisdom and discernment which the Christian needs for a virtuous life and which is progressively acquired. It is practical rather than purely speculative wisdom (cf. Phil 1:9)."

Verse 6

ἐν δὲ τῇ γνώσει τὴν ἐγκράτειαν, ἐν δὲ τῇ ἐγκρατεῖα τὴν ὑπομονήν, ἐν δὲ τῇ ὑπομονῇ τὴν εὐσεβειαν,

ἐγκρατεία, ας f self-control

Self control is to be exercised not only in food and drink, but in every aspect of life (see Gal 5:23). It means controlling the passions instead of being controlled by them.

"Once again Peter uses a word which must have cut the false teachers like a whiplash. They claimed that knowledge released them from the need for self-control (2:10ff, 3:3). Peter emphasised that true knowledge leads on to self-control. Any system which divorces religion from ethics is fundamental heresy." Green. Bauckham adds, "It is perhaps worth noticing that in Gal 5:23 it occurs in the context of warning against the misuse of Christian freedom in libertinism (Gal 5:13), which is also the problem in 2 Peter (2:19)."

ὑπομονή, ης f patience, endurance

Cf. Rom 5:3-4; 1 Tim 6:11; 2 Tim 3:10; Titus 2:2; Rev 2:19. "The temper of mind which is unmoved by difficulty and distress, and which can withstand the two Satanic agencies of opposition from the world without and enticement from the flesh within ... It springs from faith in the promises of God, knowledge of Christ, experience of his divine power (vv. 3-4)." Green.

"In Jewish and early Christian usage the endurance is associated not with personal bravery or Stoic detachment, but with the believer's trust in God and hope for the fulfillment of God's promises." Bauckham.

εὐσεβεία, ας f godliness, godly life

'Reverence', 'piety' – a practical awareness of God in every part of life and consciously living to please him.

Verse 7

ἐν δὲ τῇ εὐσεβείᾳ τὴν φιλαδεφίαν, ἐν δὲ τῇ φιλαδεφίᾳ τὴν ἀγάπην·

φιλαδέλφια, ας f brotherly love

"But *godliness* cannot exist without *brotherly kindness*. If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar' (1 Jn 4:20). Love for Christian brethren is a distinguishing mark of true discipleship, and represents yet another area where the false teachers were so distressingly deficient." Green.

"In non-Christian usage this word denoted family affection between physical brothers and sisters, but the early Church used it for fellow-believers, brothers and sisters in the faith (Rom 12:10; 1 Thess; 4:9; Heb 13:1; 1 Pet 1:22). It is therefore a specifically Christian feature of the list in 2 Peter." Bauckham.

ἀγάπη is the crowning Christian virtue, "The greatest of these is love" (1 Cor 13:13). It is love like God's love for us. It has its origin entirely in the agent and not in the object. "A deliberate desire for the highest good of the one loved, which shows itself in sacrificial action for that person's good." Green.

Verse 8

ταῦτα γὰρ ὑμῖν ὑπάρχοντα καὶ πλεονάζοντα οὐκ ἀργούς οὐδὲ ἀκαρπούς καθίστησιν εἰς τὴν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐπίγνωσιν·

ὑπαρχω be (equivalent to εἶμι), be at one's disposal

'if these things are in you.'

πλεονάζω increase, grow

"Lack of growth is a sign of spiritual death." Green.

ἀργός, η, ον idle, unemployed

ἀκαρπός, ον barren, unfruitful

καθίστημι and καθιστανω put in charge, make (someone to be something)

ἐπίγνωσις, εως f knowledge

In our daily progress in the knowledge of Jesus Christ we must not be idle or unfruitful. We know more of Christ as we walk in conformity to him.

Bauckham suggests that knowledge of Jesus Christ is the *root* from which all the above grows. "Through the knowledge of Christ he has given Christians everything necessary for godly life (v 3); if they exercise the virtues, this knowledge will be fruitful."

Verse 9

ὃ γὰρ μὴ πάρεστιν ταῦτα, τυφλός ἐστιν μωπάζων, λήθην λαβὼν τοῦ καθαρισμοῦ τῶν πάλοι αὐτοῦ ἁμαρτημάτων.

παρεῖμι be present

τυφλός, η, ον blind

μωπαζω be shortsighted

This rare word is *hapax legomenon* in the NT. Either 'short sighted', i.e. engrossed in the earthly and unable to see the heavenly, or another meaning may be 'to blink or shut the eyes' – they have wilfully closed their eyes to the light.

ληθη, ης f forgetfulness; ληθην λαμβανω
τινος forget something
λαβων Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s λαμβανω

"Can only mean that the man has deliberately forgotten, put out of his mind, the fact that he has been *purged from his old sins*. Peter may have in mind here the public confession and vows taken by converts at their baptism (Acts 2:38; 22:16). Their *old sins* would then be those committed before they became Christians, the cleansing of which would be a corollary of being made a partaker of the divine nature. The man who makes no effort (v.5) to grow in grace is going back on his baptismal contract." Green. Bauckham comments similarly, "The forgiveness received in baptism is a decisive break with the old sinful life and should therefore be the beginning of a virtuous life. The Christian who does not pursue virtue must have forgotten his baptism, and is in danger of relapsing into his pre-Christian condition (2:22). For this implication of baptism, cf. Rom 6:1–14; 1 Cor 6:9–11."

καθαρισμος, ου m cleansing, purification
παλαι adv long ago, formerly
αμαρτια, ας f sin

Verse 10

διὸ μᾶλλον, ἀδελφοί, σπουδάσατε βεβαίαν ὑμῶν τὴν κλήσιν καὶ ἐκλογὴν ποιῆσαι· ταῦτα γὰρ ποιοῦντες οὐ μὴ πταίσητέ ποτε·

διο therefore, for this reason

Could refer back to the previous verse but more likely the whole of the preceding paragraph, vv 3-9.

μαλλον adv more; rather, instead
σπουδαζω do one's best, work hard at, be eager

The words διὰ τῶν καλῶν ἔργων (κ A Vg al) are an explanatory gloss.

βεβαιος, α, ον reliable, firm, well founded, confirmed

κλησις, εως f call, calling

Echoes τοῦ καλέσαντος in v.3.

ἐκλογη, ης f election, choosing

The middle ποιῆσαι signifies 'make sure for yourself'.

"God effectively calls whom he has preordained to life in his secret counsel before the foundation of the world; and he also carries on the perpetual course of calling through grace alone. But as he has chosen us, and calls us for this end, that we may be pure, and spotless in his presence; purity of life is not improperly called the evidence and proof of election, by which the faithful may not only testify to others that they are the children of God, but also confirm themselves in this confidence, in such a manner, however, that they fix their solid foundation on something else." Calvin.

Bauckham, however, comments, "This passage does not mean that moral progress provides the Christian with a subjective assurance of his election (the sense it was given by Luther and Calvin, and especially in seventeenth-century Calvinism), but that the ethical fruits of Christian faith are objectively necessary for the attainment of final salvation... His readers were in danger of moral apostasy, under the influence of teachers who evidently held that immorality incurred no danger of judgment."

πταίσητέ Verb, aor act subj, 2 pl πταιω

stumble, go wrong

ποτέ enclitic particle once, at any time

Cf. Jude 24. "It refers to the disaster of not reaching final salvation." Bauckham. He may stumble (Jas 3:2) but will never fall – will never utterly come to grief – because he is upheld by the power of God.

Verse 11

οὕτως γὰρ πλουσίως ἐπιχορηγηθήσεται ὑμῖν ἡ εἴσοδος εἰς τὴν αἰώνιον βασιλείαν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν καὶ σωτῆρος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

οὕτως and οὕτω adv. thus, in this way
πλουσίως adv richly, in full measure

God's provision is lavish.

ἐπιχορηγηθήσεται Verb, fut pass indic, 3 s

ἐπιχορηγεω see v.5

εἴσοδος, ου f reception, entrance

αἰώνιος, ον eternal, everlasting

τὴν αἰώνιον βασιλείαν may reflect Dan 7:27. "The *idea* of Christ's eternal kingdom is found in Luke 1:33 (cf. Rev 11:15)." Bauckham. Bauckham also comments, "In view of the eschatology of chap 3, the eternal kingdom here is not simply 'heaven,' but looks forward to the cosmic reign of God in righteousness in the new heaven and new earth (3:13). This primitive Christian hope is not 'spiritualized' here by the Hellenistic language of immortality in v 4 ... rather it provides the proper setting for it."

σωτηρ, ηρος m saviour

"Bengel likens the unholy Christian in the judgement to a sailor who just manages to make shore after a shipwreck, or to a man who barely escapes with his life from a burning house, while all his possessions are lost. In contrast, the Christian who has allowed his Lord to influence his conduct will have abundant entrance into the heavenly city, and be welcomed like a triumphant athlete victorious in the games. This whole paragraph of exhortation is thus set between two poles: what we already are in Christ and what we are to become. The truly Christian reader, unlike the scoffers, will look back to the privileges conferred on him, of partaking in the divine nature, and will seek to live worthily of it. He will also look forward to the day of assessment, and strive to live in the light of it." Green.

Verse 12

Διὸ μελλήσω ἀεὶ ὑμᾶς ὑπομνησκειν περὶ τούτων, καίπερ εἰδότας καὶ ἐστηριγμένους ἐν τῇ παρούσῃ ἀληθείᾳ.

The TR reading Διὸ οὐκ ἀμελήσω ὑμᾶς ἀεὶ ... arises from the difficulty of the best reading reproduced above.

διὸ therefore, for this reason
μελλῶ (before an infin) be going, intend

The future indicative of μελλῶ followed by a present infinitive is rare. Bauckham thinks it a circumlocution meaning 'I shall remind you' i.e. by this letter. "The apostle is represented as thinking not of the activity of writing the letter, but of the function which the letter will perform when he has written it. He intends the letter to be a *permanent* reminder of his teaching, not only to be read on one specific occasion, but to be available at all times (1:15). Thus even from the standpoint of his readers the letter's function of reminding continues into the future." In the light of the following verses it expresses the intention of the letter as a testament.

ἀεὶ always, constantly
ὑπομνησκῶ remind

"It is the importance of this issue, nothing less than their eternal destiny, which leads Peter to write like this to his readers... Such is the (sometimes wilful) forgetfulness of the human heart that one of the prime functions of the Christian minister must be to keep the basic facts of Christian truth and conduct always before the minds of his congregation. Reminders have this additional value. They are intended to *stir up* the recipients into action for themselves." Green. Pastoral work consists not in getting folk to do things but in reminding God's people of who they are and what they are called to be.

περὶ τούτων "refers back to vv 3–11, the summary of Peter's message committed to writing for the benefit of readers after his death." Bauckham.

καίπερ though, although, even though
εἰδότας Verb, perf act ptc, m acc pl οἶδα
know
ἐστηριγμένους Verb, perf pass ptc, m acc pl
στηρίζω strengthen, establish, set firm
παρεῖμι be present
ἀληθεια, ας f truth, reality

I.e. 'in the truth you have', cf. Jude 3. They have already been established in the truth. No new truth is needed, only a stirring up of their remembrance concerning what they have already been taught. "Here it means that the readers are well-grounded in the Christian faith, instructed in it, firmly committed to it, and therefore not likely to be easily misled by false teaching. Of course, the communities included those who were coming under the influence of the false teachers and who could therefore be described as 'unstable' (2:14), while the whole letter shows the writer's concern that his readers should not 'lose their stability.' So there is probably an element of hopefulness in the description of them in this verse." Bauckham.

Verse 13

δίκαιον δὲ ἡγοῦμαι, ἐφ' ὅσον εἰμὶ ἐν τούτῳ τῷ σκηνώματι, διεγείρειν ὑμᾶς ἐν ὑπομνήσει,
δικαιος, α, ον righteous, just
ἡγεομαι think, regard, consider
ὅσος, η, ον correlative pronoun, as much as;
ἐφ' ὅσον inasmuch as, while
σκηνομα, τος n tent, body

Emphasises the transitoriness of present life. Another example of Hellenistic language being used.

διεγείρω awake, wake up
ὑπομνησις, εως f remembering,
remembrance (ἐν ὑ by way of
reminder).

Verse 14

εἰδὼς ὅτι ταχινή ἐστὶν ἢ ἀπόθεσις τοῦ σκηνώματός μου, καθὼς καὶ ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ἐδήλωσέν μοι·

εἰδὼς Verb, perf act ptc, m nom s οἶδα
know, understand

ταχινός, η, ον soon, speedy

Here may mean 'suddenly' rather than 'shortly', though Bauckham argues that the meaning is 'soon'.

ἀποθεσις, εως f removal (ἄ. του σκηνώματος putting off of the body = death)

δηλωω make clear, indicate

See Jn 21:18-19.

Verse 15

σπουδάσω δὲ καὶ ἐκάστοτε ἔχειν ὑμᾶς μετὰ τὴν ἐμὴν ἐξοδὸν τὴν τούτων μνήμην ποιῆσθαι.

σπουδαζω do one's best, be eager

ἐκάστοτε at all times, always

ἐμός, η, ον 1st pers possessive adj my, mine
ἐξοδος, ου f departure, death

"It is interesting that the roots of both σκηνωμα (*tabernacle*) and ἐξοδος (*decease*) should occur in the Lucan account of the transfiguration, to which Peter goes on to refer. If 2 Peter is a pseudepigraph, its author must have been sophisticated in the extreme to produce so delicate a touch." Green.

μνημη, ης f remembrance, memory

'I will make every effort to ensure that after my death you have [what is necessary] to make remembrance of these things'. I.e. you will have a reminder of these things – a permanent record of Peter's teaching. Green argues that this is a reference to Mark's Gospel, a work in which Peter and Mark were currently engaged. Most see the reference to the present letter.

Verses 16-18

"We may regard v 16a as the first objection which the false teachers bring against the expectation of the Parousia, while vv 16b–18 are the author's first response to this objection." Bauckham.

Verse 16

Οὐ γὰρ σεσοφισμένοις μύθοις ἐξακολουθήσαντες ἐγνωρίσαμεν ὑμῖν τὴν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δύναμιν καὶ παρουσίαν, ἀλλ' ἐπόπτει γεννηθέντες τῆς ἐκείνου μεγαλειότητος.

σεσοφισμένοις Verb, perf pass ptc, m & n dat
pl σοφίζω give wisdom; pf pass ptc
cleverly made-up

μυθος, ου m myth, fanciful story

ἐξακολουθεω follow; depend on

The accusation of the false teachers. "It was the Christian eschatological teaching about the Parousia which the false teachers rejected as 'myths'." Bauckham.

γνωρίζω make known, disclose

The apostolic preaching of the gospel.

παρουσια, ας f coming, arrival, presence

"Peter is arguing that when he talks (as he has done in the previous verses) of the present power of the risen Lord to equip the Christian for holy living, and of the glorious future which awaits the faithful Christian, he is not guilty either of embellishment or of speculation. They are respectively the present and future manifestations of the historical Jesus, to whose reality he could bear personal testimony." Green.

ἐποπτης, ου m eyewitness

"The writer's real concern is to claim that the common apostolic teaching about the Parousia was based on eyewitness testimony." Bauckham.

γεννηθέντες Verb, aor pass dep ptc, m nom pl
γίνομαι

ἐκεῖνος, η, ο demonstrative adj. that (one),
he, she, it

μεγαλειότης, ητος f majesty, greatness

A rare NT word, used only of the divine majesty. The Synoptic Gospels see the transfiguration as a foretaste of the glory that belongs to the resurrected and ascended Christ and that will be manifested at his Parousia. "It might refer to the power and glory given Jesus at his ascension, of which the transfiguration might be thought a foretaste" Green. Kee comments, "The transfiguration scene is not a theophany *to*, nor an epiphany *of*, Jesus, but a proleptic vision of the exaltation of Jesus as kingly Son of Man granted to the disciples as eschatological witnesses."

Verse 17

λαβὼν γὰρ παρὰ θεοῦ πατρός τιμὴν καὶ δόξαν φωνῆς ἐνεχθείσης αὐτῷ τοιαύδε ὑπὸ τῆς μεγαλοπρεποῦς δόξης: Ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός μου οὗτός ἐστιν, εἰς ὃν ἐγὼ εὐδόκησα –

λαβων Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s λαμβανω
τιμη, ης f honour
δοξα, ης f glory

May be an echo of Ps 8:6 LXX.

ἐνεχθείσης Verb, aor pass ptc, f gen s φερω
bring, carry, bear

Bauckham suggest that, "The curious expression, 'a voice conveyed to him by' God, is a way of protecting the transcendence of God by avoiding the idea that God himself speaks directly."

τοιουσδε, αδε, ονδε gen ουδε, ασδε, ουδε of such quality, of such kind

υπο here means 'by.'

μεγαλοπρεπης, ες majestic (μ. δοξα Majestic Glory, as a name for God)

Bauckham suggest that τῆς μεγαλοπρεποῦς δόξης may be an allusion to the cloud of the Synoptic narratives which in turn are influenced by the Sinai theophany.

Most MSS conform the reading to the traditional text in Matthew. The UBS text reproduced above is that preserved in p⁷² and B. The difference in wording from the Synoptics suggests a lack of literary dependence.

ὁ υἱός μου A Messianic title, cf. Ps 2.

ἀγαπητος, η, ον beloved
εὐδοκεω be pleased, delight in

Cf. Is 42:1.

Verse 18

καὶ ταύτην τὴν φωνὴν ἡμεῖς ἠκούσαμεν ἐξ οὐρανοῦ ἐνεχθεῖσαν σὺν αὐτῷ ὄντες ἐν τῷ ἁγίῳ ὄρει.

οὐρανος, ου m heaven
ἐνεχθεῖσαν Verb, aor pass ptc, f acc s φερω
ἅγιος, α, ον holy
ὄρος, ους n mountain, hill

The place was made holy by the evident presence of God. Bauckham suggests a deliberate echo of Ps 2:6. "The apostles, claims 2 Peter, were there with Jesus when God appointed him his king, and they themselves heard the divine decree."

Verses 16-18 – Postscript

Bauckham sums up this section as follows: "This section begins the author's defense of the eschatological teaching of the apostles against the attacks of the false teachers, which continues through much of the rest of the letter. The first charge to which he replies is that when the apostles preached the expectation of the future Parousia of Jesus Christ as judge and king, their message was not based on authentic divine revelation but was a mere human invention, a 'myth' in the sense of a tale which is not true. The opponents may have argued that the apostles deliberately invented the notion of eschatological judgment at the Parousia as a means of moral control through fear. "To answer this charge the author first appeals to the apostles', especially Peter's, own eyewitness testimony to the transfiguration of Jesus – an event with which his readers would already be familiar through the Gospel traditions. In line with the primitive Christian apocalyptic understanding of the Transfiguration, our author sees it as God's appointment of Jesus as his eschatological vicegerent. In particular, he sees it as the fulfillment of the messianic prophecy in Ps 2, where, on the basis of the divine decree (v 7) which was echoed by the heavenly voice at the Transfiguration, the Son of God (v 7) is enthroned as God's anointed king (v 6), on God's 'holy mountain' (v 6), with the task of subduing the rebellious world to divine rule (vv 8–9). On the mountain of the Transfiguration Jesus was appointed to this task which he will exercise in the future when he comes in glory as the eschatological judge and ruler. The author is therefore pointing out to his readers that the Transfiguration, to which the apostles bore witness, is a basis for the expectation of the Parousia. "Thus the author tells how, at the Transfiguration, Jesus received from God the Father a share in the divine majesty, because he was appointed to a divine task, and how the apostles saw him clothed in this visible glory in which he will be seen by all at the Parousia. They also heard, in a voice from heaven, the divine declaration that God's Son had been selected by God to be his Messiah. The emphasis of the account is that *God himself* has elected Jesus to be his vicegerent, appointed him to the office and invested him with glory for the task. If the apostles' witness to this is trustworthy, then their message about the Parousia is not a human invention, but is based on this divine action and declaration."

Verse 19-21

"To the charge that the apostles preached cleverly invented myths, the author replies, secondly, that their eschatological teaching was solidly based on OT prophecy."
Bauckham.

Verse 19

καὶ ἔχομεν βεβαιότερον τὸν προφητικὸν λόγον, ᾧ καλῶς ποιεῖτε προσέχοντες ὡς λύχνῳ φαίνονται ἐν ἀσχηρῷ τόπῳ, ἕως οὗ ἡμέρα διαυγάσῃ καὶ φασφόρος ἀνατείλῃ ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν·

βεβαιότερος, α, ον more reliable, more sure

Bauckham argues that the sense is, 'moreover, we place very firm reliance on the prophetic word.' He thinks that there is no attempt to contrast the prophetic word with the apostles' own testimony but to add a further argument for the certainty of the Christian hope concerning the parousia.

προφητικός, η, ον prophetic

Bauckham argues that τὸν προφητικὸν λόγον here refers to the whole of the OT, though the author may have had specific messianic passages in mind. "The author is still arguing that when the apostles preached the Parousia, they were not following myths. On the contrary, they had reliable authorities for their message: the Transfiguration, which they witnessed, and the OT, which is inspired by God."

προσεχω pay close attention to, hold on to
λυχνος, ου m lamp
φαινω shine, give light

Cf. Ps 119:105.

ἀσχηρος, α, ον dark

The only occurrence of this word in Scripture.

τοπος, ου m place

"We are on a pilgrimage throughout our lives in this dark world. God has graciously provided us with a lamp, the Scriptures. If we pay attention to them for reproof, warning, guidance and encouragement we shall walk safely. If we neglect them, we shall be engulfed by darkness. The whole course of our lives ought to be governed by the Word of God." Green.

οὗ adv where; ἕως οὗ until

διαυγάσω dawn

φασφορος, ου m morning star

ἀνατείλῃ Verb, aor act subj, 3 s ἀνατελλω
rise, dawn, shine

Cf. Num 24:17, which was interpreted messianically in Judaism. Here the picture is of the parousia, cf. Rom 13:12; Mal 4:2 also Rev 2:28; 22:16 where Christ is called the 'Morning Star'. Green thinks the reference to its rise *in our hearts* is to *current* transformation by the Spirit: "Our inner transformation, deepened continually by the Spirit as we study the Scriptures (2 Cor. 3:18), will be completed in the great day when we shall see Him as He is, and be made like Him (1 Jn 3:2)." Bauckham thinks the reference is to the future, "Prophecy's function of illuminating the darkness of ignorance will be superseded when the full light of eschatological revelation floods the hearts of God's people... In a similar argument (1 Cor 13:8–12) Paul uses equally subjective and individual terms with reference to the age to come. Neither in Paul's case nor in 2 Peter's does this language exclude or replace the expectation of the Parousia as an objective and cosmic event (cf. 2 Pet 3:7–13)."

Verse 20

τοῦτο πρῶτον γινώσκοντες ὅτι πᾶσα προφητεία γραφῆς ἰδίας ἐπιλύσεως οὐ γίνεται, πρῶτον adv. first, in the first place

Knowing this first means 'recognise this truth to be of the utmost importance'.

γραφῆ, ης f writing, Scripture

ἰδιος, α, ον one's own

ἐπιλυσις, εως f interpretation, explanation

'Untying' or 'unravelling'. For the verb see Mk 4:34; Acts 19:39, The prophets did not deliver a word derived from their own interpretation or unravelling – it did not arise from a human attempt to unravel the future. Bauckham comments, " In true prophecy [the] interpretation is not the prophet's own explanation of his vision, but an inspired, God-given interpretation. Thus it is possible that 2 Pet 1:20 counters a view which held that the prophets may have received visions, but that their prophecies, found in the OT, are only their own interpretation of the visions, mere human guesswork. This was one way of denying the divine origin of scriptural prophecy."

Verse 21

οὗ γὰρ θελήματι ἀνθρώπου ἠνέχθη προφητεία ποτέ, ἀλλὰ ὑπὸ πνεύματος ἁγίου φερόμενοι ἐλάλησαν ἀπὸ θεοῦ ἄνθρωποι

θελημα, ατος n will, wish, desire

ἠνέχθη Verb, aor pass indic 3 s φερω bring, carry, bear, lead

Prophecy did not come about through human impulse.

ποτε enclitic particle once, formerly, at one time, ever, at any time

λαλεω speak, talk

The reading ἀπὸ θεοῦ in P⁷² B P. al is probably preferable to ἅγιοι θεοῦ in א A and most MSS, and ἀπὸ θεοῦ ἅγιοι in C ἅγιοι is a conventional epithet for the prophets (cf. 3:2) and could easily have resulted from misreading.

Peter is talking about the divine origin of Scripture. Green comments on these verses, "It is interesting that in this, perhaps the fullest and most explicit biblical reference to the inspiration of its authors, no interest should be displayed in the psychology of inspiration. The author is not concerned with what they felt like, or how much they understood, but simply with the fact that they were bearers of God's message. The relative parts played by the human and divine authors are not mentioned, but only the fact of their co-operation. He uses a fascinating maritime metaphor in verse 21 (cf. Acts 27:15, 17, where the same word, φερομένη, is used of a ship carried along by the wind). The prophets raised their sails, so to speak (they were obedient and receptive), and the Holy Spirit filled them and carried their craft along in the direction He wished. Men spoke: God spoke. Any proper doctrine of Scripture will not neglect either part of this truth. Certainly those who are convinced of God's ultimate authorship of Scripture will take every pains to discover the background, life situation, limitations, education and so forth of the human agent who co-operated with God in its production. For revelation is not a matter of passive reception: it meant active co-operation. The fact of God's inspiration did not mean a supersession of the normal mental functionings of the human author. The Holy Spirit did not use instruments; He used *men*. God's way is ever one of truth through personality, as was perfectly demonstrated at the incarnation. Moreover, He did not use *any* men, but *holy men*, those who were dedicated and pledged to His service. And even with such men, He did no violence to their personalities, but co-operated with them while revealing Himself through them. 'He says they were *moved*, not because they were out of their minds (as the heathen imagine *enthousiasmos* in their prophets), but because they dared nothing by themselves but only in obedience to the guidance of the Spirit, who held sway over their lips as in his own temple' (Calvin)."