

Last Words – 2 Peter 3

Catherine Taylor

Hi there VV team and community,

As I sit here to writing to you, I am thinking about how Peter must have felt finishing off this scroll. He knew he was going to be crucified sometime in the near future. This group must have been important to him or he would not have taken the arduous effort to write. He knew there were people already trying to twist the words of Jesus in ways that would confuse and hurt the lambs and sheep who had been bequeathed to him in that walk by the sea. If we think of someone whose journey of spiritual growth was like few mortals will ever know, he was trying to write to people who had not had his privilege or his (to put it in the vernacular) screw ups.

Endings are always informed by beginnings. In this conversation, I would like us to remember that Peter's very first lesson in the first letter was that he knew what it was like to be a pebble from and leaning on the foundation stone and, that he wanted that experience for all his readers.

I would like us to look at these words, as much as we are able, with the eyes of 1st century CE believers. Then we can look at what might be important to us in our journey. And, as promised, we will take a look at the way these words have been misappropriated and perhaps how we can react to and address those misappropriations.

Notes:

Pure – following Jesus exactly as is possible for your stage of spiritual development.

Lord – individual and covenant God

Savior – to save or to deliver... - interesting to have a God whose focus is both individual and corporate and Whose function is to deliver....which begs the reminder...deliver from what?

Peter uses both the Prophecies of the Hebrew scriptures and the words of Jesus...complementary

Questions

1. Give the context why would Peter use the terms *stir up your pure mind*?
2. Why would Peter want his readers to recall both the prophecies and the words of Jesus (as shared as accurately as they could by the apostles)
3. What do you think are the evil urges of scoffers?
4. Why do you think his concern was that scoffers suppress *by the word of God the heavens were created by God* and destroyed by water.
5. **Note: I have been looking at fire...and at water...uses in the Old Testament. We'll talk about them soon. It might be helpful to remember the escape hatches...there were several ways no one needed to die at the flood...several ways no one needed to die with Sodom**
6. Vs. 9 – why would Peter use the iteration of God Yahweh in this context?
7. What is he trying to share about the character of God?
8. What teachings did Jesus have about *the thief in the night*?
9. Vs. 11 – what do you think Peter meant the meaning of living *lives of holiness and Godliness* meant in the 1st Century
10. What do you think it means to us today?
11. Vs. 11 The Greek means *where righteousness takes residence*. What does that phrase mean to you?
12. Vs. 14 If we think of the Hebrew concept (Note: Peter was a Hebrew) of perfect meaning you are as you should be for your stage of development, what do you think that might have meant to the original readers.
13. What could it mean for us 21st century folk.

14. What do think of the concept of “the patience of our Lord as salvation”?
15. What do you think it means to grow in grace and knowledge of
 - a. Yahweh the covenant God
 - b. Jesus – Yahweh Saves
 - c. Christ – the Messiah – the One who chose and was chosen to come on an expensive rescue mission.
16. Why do you think Peter ended with “To Him be the honor” ?

These lessons were misappropriated in the first century. They are being misappropriated now.

17. How do you answer the falsehoods in your own head?
18. How would you answer those who misused them now.

What did you learn and how are you changing from our time with Peter's letters?

Writing this, I am already looking forward to our conversation. I wish for you unexpected gentleness this week. Take good care of yourself for you are infinitely valuable.

Catherine