

Excerpts from Life-Study of 2 Peter, Message 13
THE GOVERNMENT (5)

Bible Verses:

- 2 Pet. 3:13 But according to His promise we are expecting new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.
- 15 And count the long-suffering of our Lord to be salvation, even as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, wrote to you,
- 16 As also in all his letters, speaking in them concerning these things, in which some things are hard to understand, which the unlearned and unstable twist, as also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.
- 17 You therefore, beloved, since you know these things beforehand, be on your guard lest being carried away by the error of the lawless, you fall from your own steadfastness.
- 18 But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To

Him be the glory both now and unto the day of eternity. Amen.

In 3:13 Peter says, “According to His promise we are expecting new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.” The Greek word rendered “dwells” may also be translated “makes its home.” This indicates that everything will be altogether under God’s government. Nothing will be wrong; nothing will be unjust or unrighteous.

In order to prepare for the coming judgment, we should not only be found in peace, but we should also be saved from destruction. Concerning this, Peter says in 2 Peter 3:15 and 16, “And count the long-suffering of our Lord to be salvation, even as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, wrote to you, as also in all his letters, speaking in them concerning these things, in which some things are hard to understand, which the unlearned and unstable twist, as also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.”

In 3:16 Peter speaks of “these things.” In his two Epistles, comprising only eight chapters, Peter covered the entire economy of God, from eternity past before

the foundation of the world (1 Pet. 1:2, 20) to the new heavens and new earth in eternity future (2 Pet. 3:13). He unveiled the crucial things related to God's economy, concerning which things the prophets prophesied and the apostles preached (1 Pet. 1:10-12), from four sides:

(1) From the side of the Triune God:

The Triune God's divine power has provided the redeemed ones with all things that relate to life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3-4) to guard them unto full salvation (1 Pet. 1:5). God also disciplines them (5:6) by some of His varied governmental judgments (1:17; 2:23; 4:5-6, 17; 2 Pet. 2:3-4, 9; 3:7), and He will perfect, establish, strengthen, and ground them by His all grace (1 Pet. 5:10). The Lord is long-suffering toward them that they all may have opportunity to repent unto salvation (2 Pet. 3:9, 15). Then Christ will appear in glory with His full salvation for His lovers (1 Pet. 1:5, 7-9, 13; 4:13; 5:4).

(2) From the side of the believers:

They are God's chosen race, royal priesthood, holy nation, and peculiar people for His private possession to express His virtues (v. 9). They are being disciplined by His governmental judgment (1:17; 2:19-21; 3:9, 14,

17; 4:6, 12-19; 5:6, 9), are living a holy life in an excellent manner and in godliness to glorify Him (1:15; 2:12; 3:1-2), are ministering as good stewards of His varied grace for His glorification through Christ (4:10-11) (under the elders' exemplary shepherding—5:1-4), and are expecting and hastening the coming of the Lord (1:13; 2 Pet. 3:12) in order to be richly supplied with an entrance into the eternal kingdom of the Lord (1:11).

(3) From the side of Satan:

Satan is the believers' adversary, the devil, who as a roaring lion is walking about, seeking someone to devour (1 Pet. 5:8).

(4) From the side of the universe:

The fallen angels were condemned and are awaiting eternal judgment (2 Pet. 2:4); the ancient ungodly world was destroyed by a flood (v. 5; 3:6); the ungodly cities were reduced to ashes (2:6); the false teachers and heretical mockers in the apostasy and mankind in his evil living will all be judged unto destruction (vv. 1, 3, 9-10, 12; 3:3-4, 7; 1 Pet. 4:5); the heavens and the earth will be burned up (2 Pet. 3:7, 10-11); and all the dead men and the demons will be judged (1 Pet. 4:5). Then the new heavens and the new earth will come as a new

universe, in which God's righteousness will dwell for eternity (2 Pet. 3:13).

In 3:17 and 18 we have the conclusion of this Epistle. In verse 17 Peter says, "You therefore, beloved, since you know these things beforehand, be on your guard lest being carried away by the error of the lawless, you fall from your own steadfastness." Here Peter tells us to be on our guard because of the apostasy, the heretical teachings, which may carry us away to destruction by twisting the apostles' writings or the Scriptures.

In verse 18 Peter concludes, "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and unto the day of eternity. Amen." The word grow indicates that what Peter wrote in his two Epistles is a matter of life. To grow in grace is to grow by the bountiful supply of eternal life provided by the divine power (1:3-4), and to grow in the knowledge of the Lord is to grow by the realization of what Christ is. This is to grow by the enjoyment of grace and the realization of truth (John 1:14, 17). Peter ends this Epistle with the word, "To Him be the glory both now and unto the day of eternity." The pronoun Him refers to our Lord and

Savior Jesus Christ. Since such a praise is one that is rendered to our God (Rom. 11:36; 16:27), it indicates that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is God.

Read the verses and footnotes online:https://text.recoveryversion.bible/61_2Peter_3.htm#SPe3-13

Read the complete message online:<https://www.ministrybooks.org/books/reader.php?cid=TLVICbJlpmF4&s=0>

Note: This version is not intended to be printed as material for pursuit during the small group gathering. Instead, it is to be used as additional reference for brothers and sisters who want to prepare in advance for fellowship on the message. We include here notes from the commentaries of the brothers in the life-study radio program. The points from these commentaries can help enrich our understanding and, eventually, our fellowship with the saints on the selected portions of the life-study message. We still recommend that, if possible, the saints still listen to the [audio message](#) in addition to reading the [life-study message](#) for personal pursuit and for preparation for small group gatherings. We also wish to point out that these notes have not been fully polished.

[Commentary]:

Introduction

[MM]: The Apostle Peter's writings are short, but they are packed with God's economy. Today we've come to the last Life-study program from Peter, and it's a good one. This is Matt Miller, and I'm happy to have Francis Ball with me for the conclusion on Peter. Hi Francis!

[FB]: Hi Matt. It's so good to be here. And I'm really impressed with this concluding word from the Apostle Peter.

[MM]: Francis, in his two epistles, comprising only eight chapters, Peter covered the entire economy of God, from eternity past before the foundation of the world, to the new heavens and new earth in eternity future. He unveiled the crucial things related to God's economy, concerning which things the prophets prophesied and the apostles preached from four sides. Before we get into the actual program today, I'd like as part of our introduction to read a long footnote in the Recovery Version. This footnote was read in the meeting Witness Lee asked one of the brothers to read this footnote. It's Second Peter, chapter three, verse 16, footnote number two. It covers these four sides. I'd like you to help me read through this footnote. First of all, the first side being from the Triune God.

[FB]: From the side of the Triune God, as you mentioned, God, the Father has chosen a people in eternity according to His foreknowledge and has called Him to His glory. Christ, foreknown by God before the foundation of the world, but manifested in the last times, has redeemed God's chosen people by His vicarious death, through His resurrection in life and ascension in power. The Spirit sent from heaven has sanctified and purified those whom Christ has redeemed. The Triune God's divine power has provided them with all things, relating to life and godliness, guarding them unto full salvation. God also disciplines them by some of His varried governmental judgments, and He will perfect, establish, strengthen and ground them by His all grace. The Lord is long suffering toward them that they all may have opportunity to repent unto salvation. Then Christ will appear in glory with His full salvation for those who love Him.

[MM]: Francis, that's very good. That's from the side of the Triune God. The second angle from Peter's writings is from the side of the believers.

[FB]: The believers, as God's possession, have been chosen by God, called by His glory and virtue, redeemed by Christ, regenerated of God through His living word, and saved through the resurrection of Christ. They are now being guarded by the power of God, being purified to love one another, growing by feeding on the milk of the word, developing in life the spiritual virtues and being transformed and built up into a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to serve God. They are God's chosen race, royal priesthood, holy nation, a peculiar people for His private possession, to express His virtues, being disciplined by His governmental judgment, living a holy life in an excellent manner and godliness to glorify Him, ministering as good stewards of His varried grace for His glorification through Christ and expecting and hastening the coming of the Lord to be richly supplied with an

entrance into the eternal kingdom of the Lord. They are expecting further the new heavens and new earth with God's righteousness for their eternity, and they are growing continually in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus, Christ

[MM]: Francis. That's a mouthful. Okay, that's the first two sides though. This third side that Peter gave in his writings in these eight chapters is from the side of Satan. He only devoted one verse to that, and it's chapter five, verse eight in his first epistle. Satan is the believer's adversary. The devil, who was a roaring lion, is walking about seeking someone to devour. Okay, the fourth side is from the side of the universe.

[FB]: From the side of the universe, the fallen angels were condemned for eternal judgment. The ancient ungodly world was destroyed by a flood. The ungodly cities were reduced to ashes. The false teachers and heretical mockers in the apostasy and the living mankind will all be judged unto destruction. The heavens and the earth will be burned, and all the dead men and the demons will be judged. Then the new heavens and the new earth will come as a new universe in which God's righteousness will dwell for eternity.

[MM]: Thanks, Francis, that's a long introduction, longer than we normally do before we go to Witness Lee. So, let's go now to the verses that will conclude the Life-studies of Peter. It's verses 13 through 18. Let me read 13 and 14 in chapter three first, from Second Peter, *"But according to His promise we are expecting new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, since you expect these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace without spot and without blemish."*

Part I

[MM]: Francis, I really like verse 14, *"...Since you expect these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace..."* To be found by Him in peace, when He comes back, is really not a small thing, is it Francis?

[FB]: That is a real thing to be diligent for. I just thank the Lord for such a word of righteousness that Peter gives us that we have the opportunity to be found in peace. This is a desire in my heart that when the Lord comes back, I would be found in peace, having received His forgiveness and having allowed Him to work in me all His righteousness, so that we could be at peace with Him when He comes.

[MM]: You know, that's at peace with God, but I think also Peter's implying not just having peace with God, but also having peace with man. I guess, to have a clear conscience, this really takes quite an exercise, doesn't it?

[FB]: It certainly does. And then the Lord has given us time for this. We have the promise of His coming, but He's not being delayed needlessly. He's delaying it so He can judge us, so we can be at peace. He wants us to get the full salvation so He's given us the opportunity to repent, so we can be one with Him, at peace with Him and at peace with men.

[MM]: Francis, in a practical way, I'd like to ask you, from your many years of experience, how can we be at peace with others? How do we do that in a practical way before the Lord to fulfill what Peter's talking about here?

[FB]: We have to confess. We have to repent. We have to make things right between us and others, and certainly we have to repent to God. God's delay is not because He's tardy or waiting, it's because He's given us the opportunity to be fully saved in every aspect of our being. We could have the peace with God. Everything would be right with no condemnation on our conscience.

[MM]: Well, that's very good. I think there's a lot more here, but for time's sake, Francis, I think we should go on to the next verse, which is verses 15 and 16, *"And count the long suffering of our Lord to be salvation, even as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, wrote to you, As also in all His letters,*

speaking in them concerning these things, in which some things are hard to understand, which the unlearned and unstable twist, as also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.” Let's go back to Witness Lee.

Part II

[MM]: Francis, it's interesting to see the apostle Peter's commendation of the Apostle Paul's writing concerning these things in verse 16, especially when Paul had earlier rebuked Peter to his face. Could you please talk a little bit about this relationship between Paul and Peter?

[FB]: Well, Matt, I feel like this is such a beautiful, excellent commendation on Peter's part concerning Paul's writings. Although the Corinthians attempted to divide Peter and Paul according to their own divisive preference, Peter commends Paul and says that both of them teach the same things, these things, and that Paul's writings should not be twisted, but be regarded as the rest of the Scriptures and received the same respect as the Old Testament. For Peter to make such a commendation is a great thing, for it was he who was rebuked by Paul, as you mentioned to his face, regarding the New Testament faith. This indicates that Peter was bold in admitting that the early apostles, like John, Paul and himself, although their style, terminology, utterance, aspects of their views, and presentations of their teachings differ one from another, participated in the same unique ministry, the ministry of the New Testament, such a ministry, ministers to people as its focus, the all inclusive Christ as the embodiment of the Triune God, who, after passing through the process of incarnation, human living, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension, dispenses Himself through the redemption of Christ and by the operation of the Holy Spirit to His redeemed people as their unique portion of life, life-supply and everything for the building up of the church as the Body of Christ, which will consummate in the full expression, the fullness of the Triune God according to the eternal purpose of the Father.

[MM]: Francis, that's an amazing comparison between Paul and Peter that even though they had different aspects, different views, it's really the same things. And that's why I like that phrase in verse 16. Or Peter even said this concerning these things, I think that word these things really summarizes God's economy throughout the whole New Testament, whether it's Peter's writing, Paul's writings, even John's writings.

[FB]: It's marvelous how these writings in the New Testament all are one way to get God into man, to express God Himself in humanity. That's the reason Christ came, and that's the reason He has redeemed so many people and given them the opportunity to be fully saved, saved in the fullest sense, before He comes, so He could be expressed.

[MM]: You know, Francis, I wonder there's a lot of Christian teachers out there if they could understand this relationship between the writers of the New Testament. It might take a lot of divisions away today, wouldn't it?

[FB]: Would not that be wonderful? God's intention is that we all would be one, and not only one in life, but also serving in one accord, all speaking, as Peter points out here, as he and Paul were speaking the same thing. So, if we would all be speaking the same thing according to God's economy, the Lord could save us all in a full way.

[MM]: And that same thing is the revelation of the New Testament through the writing of the New Testament apostles.

[FB]: That's right.

[MM]: Well, let's go on to the conclusion Francis of today's life study. Let me read chapter three, verses 17 and 18 of Second Peter, *“...You therefore, beloved, since you know these things beforehand, be on your guard lest being carried away by the error of the lawless, you fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and unto the day of eternity. Amen.”*

Here's Witness Lee for the conclusion of not only today's Life-study, but the conclusion of the Life-studies of First and Second Peter.

Part III

[MM]: Well, Francis Peter's conclusion starts out with a charge to be on your guard, and it ended with growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Your final thoughts.

[FB]: Brother Matt, I feel like this is a tremendous message that is needed by all of us Christians to realize that the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ has redeemed us and has come into us as life to be all that we need and even prepare us for the second coming of Christ and all the judgments that will come on the earth. We will be saved from that because God righteously forgave us, and He righteously gives us the opportunity to repent and to gain the full salvation by growing in life. I just appreciate so much Peter's writings, much more than I ever have before. When I hear these kind of things that are so practical and so useful for our being at peace at the prospect of the Lord's coming, the judgment will all be over then. There will be nothing to judge, because everything will be in righteousness. I liked it so much to see that John always emphasized God's love. Paul always emphasizes God's grace. And now Peter emphasizes God's righteousness and prepares us for meeting the righteous judge. Amen,

[MM]: Well, Francis, you can tell at the end of his life, after having been one to fight so much for God's interests and seen so much destruction and even apostasy, attacking God's New Testament economy, how he could end with such a strong word about to be on the guard, because he can tell there is something out there, this apostasy, this degradation, the decline, is attacking what God has given us. So, we need to be on guard.

[FB]: That's right, guard against any kind of false teaching.

[MM]: So, Francis, I hope our listeners, as we end the life study of Peter would also be on guard, and grow in the grace and knowledge of our Savior, Jesus Christ. I think that's an excellent fitting conclusion to the Life-study of 1 and 2 Peter. Francis, thanks for coming into the studio today.

[FB]: Thank you very much for allowing me to do so.

[MM]: And thank you also for joining us. We're going to go on to the life-study of Jude in our next program. So we hope you'll be with us for that.

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