

# 1-2 PETER



## 1 PETER

### Read 1 Peter 1:1–5

The greeting and thanksgiving blessing of this letter address two important issues: (1) a sense of being connected with other believers on the journey of faith and (2) God's special calling to live a new way of life in Jesus Christ.

**Reflect:** This letter begins with the image of “exiles...chosen and destined by God” living throughout various regions of Asia Minor. What is your understanding of being a believer, an exile, who has been both “chosen and destined by God”?

**Pray:** Pray for the willingness and openness to go in new directions in your life, and ask for God's strength as you travel the journey of faith, especially during times of adversity and uncertainty.

**Act:** Be attentive to “exiles” experiencing difficulties. Consider some specific ways of offering helpful directions and assistance to another person on the road of life that you travel together.

### Salutation

**1** Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To the exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, <sup>2</sup> who have been chosen and destined by God the Father and sanctified by the Spirit to be obedient to Jesus Christ and to be sprinkled with his blood:

May grace and peace be yours in abundance.

### A Living Hope

**3** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup> and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup> who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. <sup>6</sup> In this you rejoice,<sup>a</sup> even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, <sup>7</sup> so that the genuineness of your faith—being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. <sup>8</sup> Although you have not seen<sup>b</sup> him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, <sup>9</sup> for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

**10** Concerning this salvation, the prophets who

<sup>a</sup> Or Rejoice in this

<sup>b</sup> Other ancient authorities read known

### Read 1 Peter 1:6–12

While faith is a great and precious gift, we who have faith will still experience times of trial and testing. Like a precious metal that is tested and refined by fire, the gift of faith undergoes a similar type of process. The prophets from the past testify to this understanding.

**Reflect:** Consider a time when your faith was tested. What was this experience like? In what ways has your faith been refined as a precious gift throughout your life?

**Pray:** Abraham, our ancestor in faith, exhibited trust and confidence during times when God asked him to do something difficult (leave his homeland, send away Hagar and Ishmael, sacrifice his only son Isaac, etc.) Pray that you may have the same type of trust and confidence.

**Act:** Consider a specific occasion when your faith was tested and tried. What did you learn about yourself, your relationship with God, and your relationships with others that will help you when your faith will be tested and tried in the future?

### Read 1 Peter 1:13–25

The gift of faith leads to a radically new and different way of life. Specific recommendations and suggestions are offered about living as obedient children, conducting ourselves with reverence, and loving from pure hearts.

**Reflect:** What does the phrase “You shall be holy, for I am holy” mean to you? In what ways are you answering this call to be holy in your own life?

prophesied of the grace that was to be yours made careful search and inquiry,<sup>11</sup> inquiring about the person or time that the Spirit of Christ within them indicated when it testified in advance to the sufferings destined for Christ and the subsequent glory.<sup>12</sup> It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in regard to the things that have now been announced to you through those who brought you good news by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things into which angels long to look!

### A Call to Holy Living

13 Therefore prepare your minds for action;<sup>a</sup> discipline yourselves; set all your hope on the grace that Jesus Christ will bring you when he is revealed.<sup>14</sup> Like obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires that you formerly had in ignorance.<sup>15</sup> Instead, as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct;<sup>16</sup> for it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”

17 If you invoke as Father the one who judges all people impartially according to their deeds, live in reverent fear during the time of your exile.<sup>18</sup> You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold,<sup>19</sup> but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish.<sup>20</sup> He was destined before the foundation of the world, but was revealed at the end of the ages for your sake.<sup>21</sup> Through him you have come to trust in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are set on God.

22 Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth<sup>b</sup> so that you have genuine mutual love, love one another deeply<sup>c</sup> from the heart.<sup>d</sup> <sup>23</sup> You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God.<sup>e</sup> <sup>24</sup> For

“All flesh is like grass  
and all its glory like the flower of grass.  
The grass withers,  
and the flower falls,

<sup>25</sup> but the word of the Lord endures forever.”  
That word is the good news that was announced to you.

### The Living Stone and a Chosen People

**2** Rid yourselves, therefore, of all malice, and all guile, insincerity, envy, and all slander.<sup>2</sup> Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation—<sup>3</sup> if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

4 Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by

<sup>a</sup> Gk *gird up the loins of your mind*

<sup>b</sup> Other ancient authorities add *through the Spirit*

<sup>c</sup> Or *constantly*

<sup>d</sup> Other ancient authorities read *a pure heart*

<sup>e</sup> Or *through the word of the living and enduring God*

**Pray:** Life is a holy journey. Pray to conduct yourself “in reverent fear during the time of your exile.”

**Act:** Examine some aspect of your life that needs some improvement. What specific changes, steps, or actions do you need to take in order to become holy?

### Read 1 Peter 2:1–10

This section focuses on two Old Testament images, “stone” and “people,” and applies those images to the church.

**Reflect:** Several other helpful images are offered for reflection: a living stone, a precious cornerstone, a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s people. Choose one of these images. Reflect upon its meaning and significance for you.

**Pray:** Stones are often viewed as inanimate objects. Pray that we may have the spiritual sense to become “living stones” and allow ourselves to “be built into a spiritual house.”

**Act:** St. Francis of Assisi was told by Jesus to “go and rebuild my house that is in need of repair.” Commit yourself to undertaking some type of specific repair, either in your own personal life or in the life of your local church community.

mortals yet chosen and precious in God’s sight, and <sup>5</sup> like living stones, let yourselves be built<sup>a</sup> into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. <sup>6</sup> For it stands in scripture:

“See, I am laying in Zion a stone,  
a cornerstone chosen and precious;  
and whoever believes in him<sup>b</sup> will not be put to shame.”

<sup>7</sup> To you then who believe, he is precious; but for those who do not believe,

“The stone that the builders rejected  
has become the very head of the corner,”

<sup>8</sup> and

“A stone that makes them stumble,  
and a rock that makes them fall.”

They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

<sup>9</sup> But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people,<sup>c</sup> in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

<sup>10</sup> Once you were not a people,  
but now you are God’s people;  
once you had not received mercy,  
but now you have received mercy.

### Live as Servants of God

<sup>11</sup> Beloved, I urge you as aliens and exiles to abstain from the desires of the flesh that wage war against the soul. <sup>12</sup> Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that, though they malign you as evildoers, they may see your honorable deeds and glorify God when he comes to judge.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>13</sup> For the Lord’s sake accept the authority of every human institution,<sup>e</sup> whether of the emperor as supreme, <sup>14</sup> or of governors, as sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to praise those who do right. <sup>15</sup> For it is God’s will that by doing right you should silence the ignorance of the foolish. <sup>16</sup> As servants<sup>f</sup> of God, live as free people, yet do not use your freedom as a pretext for evil. <sup>17</sup> Honor everyone. Love the family of believers.<sup>g</sup> <sup>18</sup> Fear God. Honor the emperor.

### The Example of Christ’s Suffering

<sup>18</sup> Slaves, accept the authority of your masters with all deference, not only those who are kind and gentle but also those who are harsh. <sup>19</sup> For it is a credit to you if, being aware of God, you endure pain while suffering unjustly. <sup>20</sup> If you endure when you are beaten for doing wrong, what credit is that? But if you endure when you

<sup>a</sup> Or you yourselves are being built

<sup>b</sup> Or it

<sup>c</sup> Gk a people for his possession

<sup>d</sup> Gk God on the day of visitation

<sup>e</sup> Or every institution ordained for human beings

<sup>f</sup> Gk slaves

<sup>g</sup> Gk Love the brotherhood

### Read 1 Peter 2:11–25

Christian faith needs to be lived in the context of a larger society that does not necessarily appreciate or agree with what Christianity teaches. Giving credible witness to others who are not part of our faith community is important and necessary.

**Reflect:** In what ways can I give credible Christian witness, both as a member of society and in my relationships with others?

**Pray:** Pray for Christians who hold public office, that they may be inspired by gospel values in their leadership and decisions.

**Act:** Keep informed about current events and issues. Participate in ways that exemplify being a responsible Christian citizen.

### Read 1 Peter 3:1–12

Advice is offered for Christian spouses, and a practical code of conduct is presented for the Christian community. Since many of those addressed in this section are converts to the faith, a challenge to live by higher and different standards is made.

**Reflect:** In what ways does your behavior as a Christian differ from the behavior that is typical in your society?

**Pray:** Living a Christian way of life is not easy. Pray for the strength and willingness to be countercultural.

**Act:** Overcome the desire to “go along with the crowd” or do what is popular in the eyes of many. Be willing to take a personal stand that is noticeable to others.

do right and suffer for it, you have God’s approval. <sup>21</sup> For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps.

<sup>22</sup> “He committed no sin,

and no deceit was found in his mouth.”

<sup>23</sup> When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. <sup>24</sup> He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross,<sup>a</sup> so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds<sup>b</sup> you have been healed. <sup>25</sup> For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

### Wives and Husbands

**3** Wives, in the same way, accept the authority of your husbands, so that, even if some of them do not obey the word, they may be won over without a word by their wives’ conduct, <sup>2</sup> when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. <sup>3</sup> Do not adorn yourselves outwardly by braiding your hair, and by wearing gold ornaments or fine clothing; <sup>4</sup> rather, let your adornment be the inner self with the lasting beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in God’s sight. <sup>5</sup> It was in this way long ago that the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves by accepting the authority of their husbands. <sup>6</sup> Thus Sarah obeyed Abraham and called him lord. You have become her daughters as long as you do what is good and never let fears alarm you.

<sup>7</sup> Husbands, in the same way, show consideration for your wives in your life together, paying honor to the woman as the weaker sex,<sup>c</sup> since they too are also heirs of the gracious gift of life—so that nothing may hinder your prayers.

### Suffering for Doing Right

<sup>8</sup> Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind. <sup>9</sup> Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse; but, on the contrary, repay with a blessing. It is for this that you were called—that you might inherit a blessing. <sup>10</sup> For

“Those who desire life

and desire to see good days,

let them keep their tongues from evil

and their lips from speaking deceit;

<sup>11</sup> let them turn away from evil and do good;

let them seek peace and pursue it.

<sup>12</sup> For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous,

<sup>a</sup> Or *carried up our sins in his body to the tree*

<sup>b</sup> Gk *bruise*

<sup>c</sup> Gk *vessel*

### Read 1 Peter 3:13–22

Christians will suffer for their good deeds. The example of Jesus is recalled, along with the saving waters of the flood during the time of Noah, an image that prefigures baptism.

**Reflect:** Baptism is more than a symbolic action of ritual washing. How aware am I of my baptismal calling, and what difference does it make in my daily life?

**Pray:** Pray for patience, especially during times of suffering.

**Act:** As this passage notes, you must be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks why you have a reason for your hope. Be enthusiastic about living your Christian faith and explaining it to others.

### Read 1 Peter 4:1–11

Christianity is a call to holiness, death to a previous way of life, and a radical break from the past. Practical advice and specific examples of Christian charity are presented in this passage.

**Reflect:** Ask yourself: How Christian is my present life? Do others notice something different about me because I am a Christian?

**Pray:** Temptations abound in our lives. In response to the message offered in this section of this letter of Peter, meditate on the words prayed in the “Our Father.”

**Act:** The Christian way of life involves following the path of continual conversion and a willingness to answer the call to change our lives. Select one aspect of your life that needs improvement and consider what specific steps you need to undertake to effect this change.

and his ears are open to their prayer.

But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”

13 Now who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? <sup>14</sup> But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear,<sup>a</sup> and do not be intimidated, <sup>15</sup> but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; <sup>16</sup> yet do it with gentleness and reverence.<sup>b</sup> Keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame. <sup>17</sup> For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God’s will, than to suffer for doing evil. <sup>18</sup> For Christ also suffered<sup>c</sup> for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you<sup>d</sup> to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, <sup>19</sup> in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, <sup>20</sup> who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. <sup>21</sup> And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for<sup>e</sup> a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, <sup>22</sup> who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

### Good Stewards of God’s Grace

**4** Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh,<sup>f</sup> arm yourselves also with the same intention (for whoever has suffered in the flesh has finished with sin), <sup>2</sup> so as to live for the rest of your earthly life<sup>g</sup> no longer by human desires but by the will of God. <sup>3</sup> You have already spent enough time in doing what the Gentiles like to do, living in licentiousness, passions, drunkenness, revels, carousing, and lawless idolatry. <sup>4</sup> They are surprised that you no longer join them in the same excesses of dissipation, and so they blaspheme.<sup>h</sup> <sup>5</sup> But they will have to give an accounting to him who stands ready to judge the living and the dead. <sup>6</sup> For this is the reason the gospel was proclaimed even to the dead, so that, though they had been judged in the flesh as everyone is judged, they might live in the spirit as God does.

<sup>7</sup> The end of all things is near;<sup>i</sup> therefore be serious and discipline yourselves for the sake of your prayers. <sup>8</sup> Above all, maintain constant love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins. <sup>9</sup> Be hospitable to one another without complaining. <sup>10</sup> Like good stewards of

<sup>a</sup> Gk *their fear*

<sup>b</sup> Or *respect*

<sup>c</sup> Other ancient authorities read *died*

<sup>d</sup> Other ancient authorities read *us*

<sup>e</sup> Or *a pledge to God from*

<sup>f</sup> Other ancient authorities add *for us*; others, *for you*

<sup>g</sup> Gk *rest of the time in the flesh*

<sup>h</sup> Or *they malign you*

<sup>i</sup> Or *is at hand*



### Read 1 Peter 4:12–19

Once again, the themes of suffering, patience, and the difficulties of living a Christian life are presented. Optimism and being hopeful are constitutive parts of Christian faith.

**Reflect:** How do I see hope-filled optimism as part of my life?

**Pray:** Difficult times and circumstances often test one's faith. Pray for a sense of hope and optimism to deal with these moments of adversity.

**Act:** Consider beginning each morning by asking for God's guidance and assistance in facing the challenges of the day: "Lord God, there is nothing that is going to happen to me today that both of us cannot handle together."

the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. <sup>11</sup> Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God; whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ. To him belong the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen.

### Suffering as a Christian

<sup>12</sup> Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. <sup>13</sup> But rejoice insofar as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed. <sup>14</sup> If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory,<sup>a</sup> which is the Spirit of God, is resting on you.<sup>b</sup> <sup>15</sup> But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, a criminal, or even as a mischief maker. <sup>16</sup> Yet if any of you suffers as a Christian, do not consider it a disgrace, but glorify God because you bear this name. <sup>17</sup> For the time has come for judgment to begin with the household of God; if it begins with us, what will be the end for those who do not obey the gospel of God? <sup>18</sup> And

"If it is hard for the righteous to be saved,  
what will become of the ungodly and the  
sinners?"

<sup>19</sup> Therefore, let those suffering in accordance with God's will entrust themselves to a faithful Creator, while continuing to do good.

### Tending the Flock of God

**5** Now as an elder myself and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as one who shares in the glory to be revealed, I exhort the elders among you <sup>2</sup> to tend the flock of God that is in your charge, exercising the oversight,<sup>c</sup> not under compulsion but willingly, as God would have you do it<sup>d</sup>—not for sordid gain but eagerly. <sup>3</sup> Do not lord it over those in your charge, but be examples to the flock. <sup>4</sup> And when the chief shepherd appears, you will win the crown of glory that never fades away. <sup>5</sup> In the same way, you who are younger must accept the authority of the elders.<sup>e</sup> And all of you must clothe yourselves with humility in your dealings with one another, for

"God opposes the proud,  
but gives grace to the humble."

<sup>6</sup> Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time. <sup>7</sup> Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you. <sup>8</sup> Discipline yourselves, keep alert.<sup>f</sup> Like a roaring

<sup>a</sup> Other ancient authorities add *and of power*

<sup>b</sup> Other ancient authorities add *On their part he is blasphemed, but on your part he is glorified*

<sup>c</sup> Other ancient authorities lack *exercising the oversight*

<sup>d</sup> Other ancient authorities lack *as God would have you do it*

<sup>e</sup> Or *of those who are older*

<sup>f</sup> Or *be vigilant*

### Read 1 Peter 5

Church leaders and members of the community are given practical and specific advice as to how they are to conduct their lives and their dealings with one another. Remain steadfast in the faith, humble yourselves before God, and resist the temptations to do evil.

**Reflect:** What is my relationship to church leaders? In what ways do I show humility in my interactions with other people?

**Pray:** Humility is not easy to practice. Pray before God in the spirit of Psalm 51 for a “contrite heart.”

**Act:** As a way to conclude your reading of this letter of Peter, write down three important insights, words, or images that you find meaningful and helpful in applying and making the word of God come alive in your life.

lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour. <sup>9</sup> Resist him, steadfast in your faith, for you know that your brothers and sisters<sup>a</sup> in all the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering. <sup>10</sup> And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, support, strengthen, and establish you. <sup>11</sup> To him be the power forever and ever. Amen.

### Final Greetings and Benediction

<sup>12</sup> Through Silvanus, whom I consider a faithful brother, I have written this short letter to encourage you and to testify that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it. <sup>13</sup> Your sister church<sup>b</sup> in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you greetings; and so does my son Mark. <sup>14</sup> Greet one another with a kiss of love.

Peace to all of you who are in Christ.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Gk *your brotherhood*

<sup>b</sup> Gk *She who is*

<sup>c</sup> Other ancient authorities add *Amen*

# 2 PETER

## Salutation

**1** Simeon<sup>a</sup> Peter, a servant<sup>b</sup> and apostle of Jesus Christ,

To those who have received a faith as precious as ours through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:<sup>c</sup>

2 May grace and peace be yours in abundance in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

## The Christian's Call and Election

3 His divine power has given us everything needed for life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us by<sup>d</sup> his own glory and goodness. <sup>4</sup> Thus he has given us, through these things, his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of lust, and may become participants of the divine nature. <sup>5</sup> For this very reason, you must make every effort to support your faith with goodness, and goodness with knowledge, <sup>6</sup> and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with endurance, and endurance with godliness, <sup>7</sup> and godliness with mutual<sup>e</sup> affection, and mutual<sup>e</sup> affection with love. <sup>8</sup> For if these things are yours and are increasing among you, they keep you from being ineffective and unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup> For anyone who lacks these things is short-sighted and blind, and is forgetful of the cleansing of past sins. <sup>10</sup> Therefore, brothers and sisters,<sup>f</sup> be all the more eager to confirm your call and election, for if you do this, you will never stumble. <sup>11</sup> For in this way, entry into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be richly provided for you.

<sup>12</sup> Therefore I intend to keep on reminding you of these things, though you know them already and are established in the truth that has come to you. <sup>13</sup> I think it right, as long as I am in this body,<sup>g</sup> to refresh your memory, <sup>14</sup> since I know that my death<sup>h</sup> will come soon, as indeed our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. <sup>15</sup> And I will make every effort so that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things.

## Eyewitnesses of Christ's Glory

<sup>16</sup> For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we had been eyewitnesses of

### Read 2 Peter 1:1–11

The power of God's promise, a series of "building blocks" for which one is to grow in faith, and the future glory of entering the eternal kingdom are extolled in this exhortation.

**Reflect:** A number of virtues are presented in terms of each one building upon the other. How do you see the connections?

**Pray:** "Thy kingdom come" is an important phrase from the Lord's Prayer. How do these words become a reality in my life, not simply words that are recited?

**Act:** This passage offers several suggestions of ways in which one can supplement one's faith. Choose one of those ways, and make a conscious effort to build or develop it in your life at this time.

### Read 2 Peter 1:12–21

The *parousia*, the future return of Jesus, is not a concept of human origin but is based on reliable apostolic eyewitnesses of the majesty, especially as manifested in the transfiguration, of the Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>a</sup> Other ancient authorities read *Simon*

<sup>b</sup> Gk *slave*

<sup>c</sup> Or *of our God and the Savior Jesus Christ*

<sup>d</sup> Other ancient authorities read *through*

<sup>e</sup> Gk *brotherly*

<sup>f</sup> Gk *brothers*

<sup>g</sup> Gk *tent*

<sup>h</sup> Gk *the putting off of my tent*



**Reflect:** The phrase “This is my Son, my Beloved, with whom I am well pleased” is associated with the transfiguration. You are also chosen by God. Do you think God is “well pleased” with you?

**Pray:** The word “tent” is a biblical image that describes earthly life as transitory. Pray for those whose earthly lives are coming to an end.

**Act:** What do you still need to do to get ready for the return of Jesus or to be ready for the end of your earthly life? Be decisive, act now, and do not delay!

## Read 2 Peter 2

Harsh words are spoken about false teachers who deliberately lead others astray. They are compared to animals and their actions are condemned.

**Reflect:** Why do false teachers mislead people? What needs to be done to remedy this problem?

**Pray:** Pray for a change of heart for those who deliberately try to lead other people astray.

**Act:** Identify an individual you know who is being misled at this time by a false teacher, ideology, or social movement. Try speaking to this individual in a non-judgmental but compassionate way to offer a different and helpful viewpoint.

his majesty. <sup>17</sup> For he received honor and glory from God the Father when that voice was conveyed to him by the Majestic Glory, saying, “This is my Son, my Beloved,<sup>a</sup> with whom I am well pleased.” <sup>18</sup> We ourselves heard this voice come from heaven, while we were with him on the holy mountain.

<sup>19</sup> So we have the prophetic message more fully confirmed. You will do well to be attentive to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. <sup>20</sup> First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, <sup>21</sup> because no prophecy ever came by human will, but men and women moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.<sup>b</sup>

## False Prophets and Their Punishment

**2** But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive opinions. They will even deny the Master who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves. <sup>2</sup> Even so, many will follow their licentious ways, and because of these teachers<sup>c</sup> the way of truth will be maligned. <sup>3</sup> And in their greed they will exploit you with deceptive words. Their condemnation, pronounced against them long ago, has not been idle, and their destruction is not asleep.

<sup>4</sup> For if God did not spare the angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell<sup>d</sup> and committed them to chains<sup>e</sup> of deepest darkness to be kept until the judgment; <sup>5</sup> and if he did not spare the ancient world, even though he saved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when he brought a flood on a world of the ungodly; <sup>6</sup> and if by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes he condemned them to extinction<sup>f</sup> and made them an example of what is coming to the ungodly;<sup>g</sup> <sup>7</sup> and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man greatly distressed by the licentiousness of the lawless <sup>8</sup> (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by their lawless deeds that he saw and heard), <sup>9</sup> then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trial, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment <sup>10</sup>—especially those who indulge their flesh in depraved lust, and who despise authority.

Bold and willful, they are not afraid to slander the glorious ones,<sup>h</sup> <sup>11</sup> whereas angels, though greater in might and power, do not bring against them a slanderous judgment from the Lord.<sup>i</sup> <sup>12</sup> These people, however, are like irrational animals, mere creatures of instinct, born to be caught and killed. They slander what they do not understand, and when those creatures are de-

<sup>a</sup> Other ancient authorities read *my beloved Son*

<sup>b</sup> Other ancient authorities read *but moved by the Holy Spirit saints of God spoke*

<sup>c</sup> *Gk because of them*

<sup>d</sup> *Gk Tartaros*

<sup>e</sup> Other ancient authorities read *pits*

<sup>f</sup> Other ancient authorities lack *to extinction*

<sup>g</sup> Other ancient authorities read *an example to those who were to be ungodly*

<sup>h</sup> *Or angels; Gk glories*

<sup>i</sup> Other ancient authorities read *before the Lord*; others lack the phrase

### Read 2 Peter 3

False teachers try to deny the second coming of Jesus and debunk Christian morality. God's timetable and schedule are mysterious and unknown. Learn the lessons of scripture, do not be misled, and be prepared for the day of the Lord.

**Reflect:** How well do I use my time and talents in preparing for the day of the Lord? What do I still need to do?

**Pray:** God acts in human history in mysterious ways. Pray for the wisdom and patience to deal with the unfolding plan of salvation that God has for the world.

**Act:** Life is short and filled with unexpected events. Perhaps there is in your own life some broken or troubled relationship that needs to be addressed. Consider taking the necessary steps to heal this relationship before the day of the Lord comes.

stroyed,<sup>a</sup> they also will be destroyed, <sup>13</sup> suffering<sup>b</sup> the penalty for doing wrong. They count it a pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their dissipation<sup>c</sup> while they feast with you. <sup>14</sup> They have eyes full of adultery, insatiable for sin. They entice unsteady souls. They have hearts trained in greed. Accursed children! <sup>15</sup> They have left the straight road and have gone astray, following the road of Balaam son of Bosor,<sup>d</sup> who loved the wages of doing wrong, <sup>16</sup> but was rebuked for his own transgression; a speechless donkey spoke with a human voice and restrained the prophet's madness.

<sup>17</sup> These are waterless springs and mists driven by a storm; for them the deepest darkness has been reserved. <sup>18</sup> For they speak bombastic nonsense, and with licentious desires of the flesh they entice people who have just<sup>e</sup> escaped from those who live in error. <sup>19</sup> They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption; for people are slaves to whatever masters them. <sup>20</sup> For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overpowered, the last state has become worse for them than the first. <sup>21</sup> For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than, after knowing it, to turn back from the holy commandment that was passed on to them. <sup>22</sup> It has happened to them according to the true proverb,

“The dog turns back to its own vomit,”

and,

“The sow is washed only to wallow in the mud.”

### The Promise of the Lord's Coming

**3** This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you; in them I am trying to arouse your sincere intention by reminding you <sup>2</sup> that you should remember the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets, and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken through your apostles. <sup>3</sup> First of all you must understand this, that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and indulging their own lusts <sup>4</sup> and saying, “Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since our ancestors died,<sup>f</sup> all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation!” <sup>5</sup> They deliberately ignore this fact, that by the word of God heavens existed long ago and an earth was formed out of water and by means of water, <sup>6</sup> through which the world of that time was deluged with water and perished. <sup>7</sup> But by the same word the present heavens and earth have been reserved for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the godless.

<sup>a</sup> Gk in their destruction

<sup>b</sup> Other ancient authorities read *receiving*

<sup>c</sup> Other ancient authorities read *love-feasts*

<sup>d</sup> Other ancient authorities read *Beor*

<sup>e</sup> Other ancient authorities read *actually*

<sup>f</sup> Gk *our fathers fell asleep*

8 But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. <sup>9</sup> The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you,<sup>a</sup> not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. <sup>10</sup> But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed.<sup>b</sup>

11 Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, <sup>12</sup> waiting for and hastening<sup>c</sup> the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? <sup>13</sup> But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens

and a new earth, where righteousness is at home.

### Final Exhortation and Doxology

14 Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; <sup>15</sup> and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation. So also our beloved brother Paul wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, <sup>16</sup> speaking of this as he does in all his letters. There are some things in them hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other scriptures. <sup>17</sup> You therefore, beloved, since you are forewarned, beware that you are not carried away with the error of the lawless and lose your own stability. <sup>18</sup> But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.<sup>d</sup>

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<sup>a</sup> Other ancient authorities read *on your account*

<sup>b</sup> Other ancient authorities read *will be burned up*

<sup>c</sup> Or *earnestly desiring*

<sup>d</sup> Other ancient authorities lack *Amen*

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