

Title: Final Directions to the Last Stop (Part 3)

Passage: 2 Peter 3:15-16

Theme: Avoiding the dangers of a lost reward

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{ Read Passage }

In some ways this passage reminds me of a parent giving final instructions to their now-adult child who's off to college in another state. *Be sure you do this, be sure you don't do this. Study hard; stay focused; avoid bad company; stay in fellowship with true believers; focus on God's Word.*

Or, as I've said the past 2 wks. ==> we could picture a general who has opport. to give his troops their final marching orders B4 they embark on t/mother of all battles.

Or, a pastor who has a profound love for t/CH of JC & knowing that he is soon to die, he writes a letter that closes w/some final instructions t/goal of which is that they don't fall prey to false teaching or apathy or sin, but rather that they persevere in t/most holy faith until t/very end.

That's t/most fitting illustration for our passage. Peter was an apostle, yes. But he was also an elder/pastor (1 Peter 5:1). This is his last letter, his final will and testament as it relates to t/CH.

In that regard, our passage here in chapter 3 runs parallel to 1:12-15 - **12 Therefore, I will always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you already know them, and have been established in the truth which is present with you. 13 I consider it right, as long as I am in this earthly dwelling, to stir you up by way of reminder,**

14 knowing that the laying aside of my earthly dwelling is imminent, as also our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. 15 And I will also be diligent that at any time after my departure you will be able to call these things to mind.

Here Peter gives his last words of exhortation to t/CH. ==>
Final Directions to the Last Stop.

In that regard, *To be forewarned is to be forearmed.*

We might put ourselves in those 1st c. shoes for a moment. Of course, these words are as relevant to us as they were nearly 2k years ago.

In light of all great themes we've covered past 40 wks in this letter,

- * How are we to live our lives as believers?
- * What sorts of things are we to be mindful of?

Here are 5 things we're to keep close to our hearts as we run t/race set before us w/endur. - eyes fixed on JC t/author & perfecter of our faith.

I. A Day to Remember (14)

Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things . . .

(vv. 10-13)

. . . be diligent to be found by Him spotless and blameless, [and] in peace.

II. A Delay to Consider (15)

And consider the patience of our Lord to be salvation . . .

A. "Patience" (μακροθυμία)

A word that William Barclay defines as "The Divine Patience." It's a patient restraint of anger or wrath - a concept that was foreign to the Greeks (word rarely, if at all, occurs in classical Greek).

1. Used of God's patience in the time of Noah (1 Peter 3:20)

. . . the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark . . .

a. The flood is symbolic or a type of God's future final judgment

The flood was sudden.

The flood was a holistic judgment (no one escaped).

The righteous were relatively few. (1 Peter 3:20 - "8")

Those who were savingly related to God were mocked by those who were not.

The wicked rejected the preaching of the righteous. They mocked t/idea of judgment. True as it related to Peter & his audience. Was true of Noah.

(1) True for us today

Some of you may be familiar with Pastor Doug Wilson, of Christ Church, Moscow, Idaho. He was invited to Indiana University by [Clearnote Church](#) to talk about sexuality from a Biblical perspective. IU is in Bloomington which is also home to the Kinsey Institute, started by Alfred Kinsey who is famous for his experiments in sexuality w/the subsequent godless conclusions regarding t/same.

1966 Time Mag. interview A. Kinsey was quoted as saying that *"the only unnatural sex act is that which you can't perform."* [Fri. Jan. 21st, 1966]

I had posted a link to t/videos of Wilson's lectures along w/a 2 hr. Q&A period that followed.

If you think for a moment that the homosexual movt. isn't fueled by a deeper agenda, you need to watch this.

The lack of respect that was directed toward him by young men & women, many of which are nearly 1/3 his age, is astounding. Not to mention that he was a guest lecturer. But he was interrupted, mocked, shouted down. His arguments were for the most part ignored.

All of this in the name of diversity and tolerance.
So much for free speech.

(If you have kids that are being brainwashed into buying into this, you need to sit down with them and watch these lectures).

Remember it was Francis Schaeffer that said what we say is "unthinkable" today may become reality tomorrow. That's the way it's gone in our post-Xn culture. Cat's out of the bag; he aint going back in w/o a fight. Homosexual marriage was unthinkable yesterday. Today it's not only thinkable it's legal in some states.

What's unthinkable today?

Polygamy? Open nudity? Taxation of CHs? Banning of Home Schooling? Imprisonment of Christians for crimes of "hate speech?"
Unthinkable? Think again.

Luke 17:26–29 26 “And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: 27 they were eating, they

were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. 28 "It was the same as happened in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building; 29 but on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all.

What's not emphasized there is a given: world during Noah's day & Lot's was characterized by a rapid increase in wickedness.

So it is today. This is one of t/greatest defenses for t/truth of Xnty. Once you step o/s t/realm of God's Word you end up in t/Twilight Zone. Down is up and up is down. Right is wrong and wrong is right.

Nothing makes sense anymore. You say, *"There's no way humanistic evolution is true. The more we progress w/worse we become."*

2. Yet - in the midst of that wicked culture Noah is called by Peter a "preacher of righteousness" (2 Peter 2:5)

It's here in 2 Peter that we are told that Noah preached. He was 120 years not only building, but preaching.

120 years. This was a demonstration of God's patience and grace.

12 decades of a living object lesson as men watched this man and his family build a ship on dry land.

12 decades of building punctuated by preaching t/righteousness of God, his grace and mercy along w/impending judgment.

Here we see that great theme of patience once again.

And consider the patience of our Lord to be salvation . . .

We say that this is ==>

II. A Delay to Consider (15)

Because we're talking about God's patience as it relates to His judgment.

3. What's being delayed is His judgment (in this context is equated with the Second Coming of Jesus Christ)

a. That goes back to what we saw earlier in chapter 3

3:3-7 3 . . . mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, 4 and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation."

5 For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water, 6 through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water. 7 But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

b. You see t/parallel? Mocking, Warning, Patience, Judgment

That which happened in t/Past is a forerunner of what will happen in a much greater fashion in t/future.

Mockers will laugh at t/idea of judgment; God's elect will continue to warn sinners about t/impending judgment; God will be patient until every last person is redeemed: those He's ordained to be born into this world & be born again into t/world to come.

The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not willing for any to perish, but for all to come to repentance.

II. A Delay to Consider (15)

And consider the patience of our Lord to be salvation . . .

Romans 11:25 . . . a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in;

B. Peter adds ==>

. . . just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him wrote to you–

Peter says ==>

"Paul wrote to you concerning these same matters. (cf. v. 16)

We take from that issues specif. pertaining to X's return, future judgment, and t/necessity of repentance.

These same Xns to whom Peter writes in Asia Minor had been on t/receiving end of some of Paul's letters as well.

May be Romans; Ephesians; Colossians; Galatians; 1-2 Thess.

Colossians 4:16 **When this letter is read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and you, for your part read my letter that is coming from Laodicea.**

C. Peter refers to ==>

... **the wisdom given to him** ... Divine passive (NIV - "God gave to him.").

1. We can look at this as the NT side of 1:20-21

2 Peter 1:20–21 **20 But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, 21 for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.**

While Peter has in mind t/OT Scriptures, this also applies by extension to t/NT that was still in formulation when Peter wrote this.

But we get a very interesting glimpse here into how the NT was coming together.

2. Before we get to Point #3 (A Danger to Avoid) I want you to see something else in that regard

For that we skip ahead to t/end of v. 16 ==>

Peter writes ==>

As also in all his [Paul's] letters, speaking in them concerning these things [What things?], in which are some things hard to understand, which the unlearned and unstable twist, as also the rest of the Scriptures . . .

a. Catch that?

The false teachers twist / distort Paul's letters as they do the rest of the Scriptures.

What's that imply?

Peter is classifying Paul's letters as being included w/the rest of the Scriptures (S. = OT canon that was already fixed by t/time of J.).

(1) Scriptures = Grk. γραφή used 51x in the NT

Exclusively refers to the OT.

MAT 22:29 But Jesus answered and said to them, "You are mistaken, not understanding the Scriptures, or the power of God.

LUK 4:21 And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

LUK 24:27 And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.

LUK 24:45 Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,

JOH 10:35 . . . (and the Scripture cannot be broken),

ACT 17:2 And according to Paul's custom, he went to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures,

ACT 17:11 Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, {to see} whether these things were so.

ROM 1:2 refers to the γραφαις αγιας

These are the Scriptures that sum up the Gospel

1CO 15:3-4 3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

(2) Three times Peter uses the word γραφή

1 Peter 2:6 where he quotes Isaiah 28:16 as Scripture

2 Peter 1:20 **But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation,**

Here in 3:16

b. What really nails it is that he uses the adjective λοιπῶς ("rest" as in "the rest of the Scriptures")

Wherever this word functions as an adjective it refers to others of the same kind ==>

"the other virgins" (Matt 25:11) *Others of the same kind.*

"the rest of the apostles" (Acts 2:37) *Other apostles.*

"the rest of the churches" (2 Cor 12:13) *Other churches*

"the rest of the Jews" (Gal 2:13) *The other Jews*

When Peter writes ==>

... the unlearned and unstable twist [Paul's letters], as [they do] also the rest of the Scriptures . . .

He's clearly equating the two.

(1) This is nothing short of remarkable

Peter mentions this almost in passing. He doesn't defend it // explain it. He just states it as a recognized fact.

(a) He doesn't act like this would come as a shock to his readers

By this time they had come to receive a corpus of Paul's letters as part of t/canon of Scripture = to t/OT.

Michael J. Kruger, in his excellent book that just came out this year *Canon Revisited: Establishing the Origins and Authority of the NT Books*, writes ==>

This suggests that the scriptural status of at least some of Paul's letters was reasonably widespread by this time. Moreover, if Paul's letters are regarded as Scripture, it is difficult to avoid the implication that other apostolic letters would be regarded as Scripture as well. Given that 2 Peter begins with a very clear claim to apostolic authority (1:1), there is little reason to think that its readers would have seen it as any less authoritative than Paul's letters (particularly given Peter's status in early Christianity). Indeed, this is confirmed by Peter's description of Paul as "our" [ἡμῶν] beloved brother" in 3:15, which is likely a reference to the college of apostles in which he would certainly include himself. [204]

By the way you see the same thing in 1 Tim 5:18. There Paul defends t/financial support of CH elders by quoting 2 passages. So he writes: **For the Scripture says, "YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING," and "The laborer is worthy of his wages."**

The first passage he quotes is from the OT (Deut. 25:4). The 2d is from Luke's Gospel (10:7). Paul takes 1 quote from t/OT & 1 from t/NT and connects them w/the conjunction και "and" using the singular word "Scripture" (γραφή).

b. This is all a footnote –

– but it's an important one, esp. being that we live in an age where pop culture would have you believe that t/CH conspired early on to est. what books were to be part of the NT. No conspiracy.

This was already happening under the providence of God in the 1st c.

Third aspect of Peter's final words of exhortation ==>

III. A Danger to Avoid (16)

As also in all his letters [ἐπιστολῆ], speaking in them concerning these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the unlearned and unstable twist, as also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.

There's a lot here!

A. First thing to note is that Peter affirms that some things that Paul wrote were difficult to comprehend

1. Phrase "hard to understand" comes from a single word in Greek (δυσ νόη τος)

Not only is it rare in the NT (only here) it's also quite rare in ancient Gk. as a whole. We only have something like 14 recorded instances of this word being used over the span of 6 centuries.

The uses relate to something that's difficult to interpret.

Word is used by Hermas in his Similitudes (late 1st or early 2nd c.) where he asks for an interpretation of a vision that is "difficult for people to understand." [*Sim.* 9:14:4]

It's a word that relates to interpreting something that's difficult to comprehend.

It's one thing to affirm that there are things in the Bible that are difficult to understand

If it was all easy we wouldn't have to worry about handling it accurately & having CH leaders who are diligent in their scholarship.

Not everything in t/Bible is easy.

But it's another thing when you have men and women who are intent on twisting those things into unrecognizable doctrinal rubble.

B. If we narrow this down we know that Peter has in mind some rather specific issues & persons

Issues = those things that Peter has written about (holy living in light of future judgment) – the same things that Paul also wrote about.

The very same things that

. . . the unlearned and unstable twist . . .

Those are the persons. The unlearned & unstable.

1. May be that these two words describe two classes of men:

1) Unlearned (false teachers);

2) Unstable (their disciples)

Same word used in 2:14 where Peter states that the false teachers have . . . eyes full of adultery that never cease from sin, [that they] *entice unstable souls* . . .

C. Theological Phrase of the Day: Perspicuity of Scripture

When we affirm t/POS we're affirming that it is understandable. It's not written in some secret code // at a level where you have to possess a Ph.D. to understand it.

If you look at each of the books of the Bible you will recognize that they were written for t/average person to understand.

That doesn't mean we don't need t/Spirit to guide us.

Doesn't mean that all parts of Scripture are = clear.

It does mean that when we read, for example, 1 Sam. 17:40, that David chose "5 smooth stones" for his sling that he was in fact picking up just that: 5 smooth stones. That's something anyone can understand.

- * We also have to understand that there are 1200 chapters in t/Bible.
- * That we are dealing w/different authors over a span of 1500 yrs. who wrote in 2 different languages.
- * There are diff. genres of lit., from didactic; to prophetic; to historic.
- * There are many different figures of speech.
- * We have parables and narratives and types.

The perspicuity of Scripture doesn't mean we don't need scholars.
The perspicuity of Scripture doesn't mean we don't need to be scholarly.
The perspicuity of Scripture doesn't mean we don't give due consideration to what t/CH has taught t/o it's history

Sola Scriptura does not mean, as Romanists would have you believe, that it's every man with a Bible to believe whatever he wants.

I don't care what we're talking about be it science, politics, literature, religion – there will always be diffs in interpret. on some issues.

That's not all bad. We're not cookie-cutter robots who are all programed to act and think alike. Not reality.

In this CH we have some different views on what I like to call 2ndary or tertiary issues.

But God has programed t/elect to believe in certain core truths. As I've said before, it's remarkable that out of t/many different Protestant

denominations, those who truly affirm *Sola Scriptura* are very much like-minded.

We agree on God's Triunity / X's death, burial and resurrection / Human depravity // Future Judgment // Only hope of eternal life being JC - Salv. by grace thru faith alone. Those are some remarkable things to agree on. Doesn't happen by accident.

Always been true t/o history that fallen men will twist God's Word. Legacy that goes back to Satan in t/Garden (Gen. 3).

A balance must be maintained between 1) the perspicuity of Scripture; 2) the exegetical demands of Scripture.

What's ==>

III. A Danger to Avoid (16)

The danger to avoid is 2-fold: We are to avoid those who twist Scripture; we are avoid being guilty of this ourselves.

D. Peter uses a graphic word (only found here in the entire NT)

When he says that the ==>

... unlearned and unstable twist . . . the Scriptures, to their own destruction.

He uses the verb στρεβλω.

1. From στρεβλος (twisted) and στρεφω (to turn)

Ancient Greek historian Herodotus used στρεβλω of twisting or wrenching a dislocated limb, with a view to setting it.

Noun was used of torture devices [BAGD]

A stréble was a winch, an instrument that produced torture by twisting or pulling one's limbs out of joint. Thus one meaning of the verb was to put to the rack.

We could say, to put eyes to the picture ==>

. . . unlearned and unstable torture . . . the Scriptures, to their own destruction. [Typical word used of eschatological judgment]

We see more and more of this as t/CH has moved away from scholarship to subjectivism and pragmatism.

Eph. 4:10-14.

2. Paul's letters aren't the only target

No part of Scripture is immune from their attack. They also
. . . twist . . . the rest of the Scriptures . . .

The 8th c. churchman Bede wrote ==>

"The heretics corrupt every part of Scripture. There is no book in either the Old or the New Testament which they have not perverted according to their own fantasies, by adding to it, subtracting from it or altering something which it says to make it mean something else. Those whom Peter calls unlearned and unstable are the people who have neither the light of knowledge nor the steadfastness of mind to stay in the company of the learned until they are properly instructed. For the only cure for the unlearned is to listen in all humility to the words of those who know better. The heretics do not have this humility, with the result that they are tossed about by the wind like chaff and are swept right out of the church. But those who try to corrupt the holy Scriptures and pervert the catholic faith do nothing other than condemn themselves." [ACC, 162]

There are those who would place t/WOG on t/rack, stretching and twisting it in a vain attempt to make it say something it doesn't.

3. Sometimes you hear the phrase *enough knowledge to be dangerous*

Steer clear of those who go around quoting "the Greek" to make some heretical point – like JC isn't God or that everyone goes to heaven in t/end.

Steer clear of those who claim Spirit-given interpretations or who mock t/need for scholarship.

Back in my early days here at CC I was teaching a 101 class & when I got to t/point in our By-Laws where it states that we value scholarship someone in the class sarcastically laughed. No surprise that person isn't here anymore.

No wonder the CH is so confused.

What's the difference between Rob Bell; T.D. Jakes; Joyce Meyer; Joel Osteen; and the Pope? (not a joke).

The problem is that there are thousands who claim to be born again that don't see any difference. That's t/problem.

T/CH has lost its ability to discern.

Peter says (v. 17) . . . be on your guard . . .

IV. A Discipline to Pursue (17-18a)

V. A Doxology to Cherish (18b)

John Wesley wrote in the preface of his Standard Sermons: "I am a spirit come from God and returning to God; just hovering over a great gulf; 'til a few moments hence I am no more seen; I drop into an unchangeable eternity! I want to know one thing -- the way to heaven ... He hath written it down in a book. O give me that book! At any price, give me the book of God! I have it: here is knowledge enough for me. Let me be *homo unius libri* (a man of one book)."

O that we might be a people of the book!

"Bible study is the metal that makes a Christian. This is the strong meat on which holy men are nourished. This is that which makes the bone and sinew of men who keep God's way in defiance of every adversary."

[C.H. Spurgeon]

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the way of sinners nor sits in the seat of scoffers, but his delight is in the law of the Lord and on his law he meditates day & night. (Ps 1)