

# Contrasts In The Christian Life

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## 2Peter 3:1-18

In our text, the apostle has delivered an overview to believers of things to come. In that exposition he also warned that there would be people who would scoff at what believers preached as reality. Those scoffers would present arguments to try to convince people that no such thing as some of us say the bible teaches will even happen. He also notes that this skepticism by unbelievers will have an impact, and it will threaten sound teaching, and has the potential to undermine the firm belief of Christians in that which is taught by faithful men.

At the end of our text (**vv. 17-18**) Peter outlines two possible outcomes of this undermining work of men who twist the scriptures to their own ends. In writing of these two possible outcomes he leaves us with a great text to use in examining contrasts in Christian life. We want to look at those two contrasting outcomes and may the Holy Spirit strengthen us against going the way of the first one.

### I. The First Possible State: v. 18 “...fall from your own steadfastness.”

#### ❖ Reason why you shouldn't fall from your own steadfastness:

- Seeing you know these things before: what things?
- **v. 7** The same word of God which brought the flood and destruction of the world is the same word that now keeps the earth in reserve waiting for a day of judgment and destruction
- **v. 9 The Lord is longsuffering for the purpose of bringing every child of God into the fold**
- **v. 10** The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night
  - No advertisement or supplying indicators that it will happen
  - No advance notice
  - In a moment when the property owner does not expect (when you think of this, you have to realize how mankind is playing right into this one)
- **v. 11** Everything mankind knows will be destroyed
- **v. 13** A new heaven and a new earth await us who believe
- **v. 16** In the meantime, (you know that) unlearned and unstable men twist scripture and bible truth to try to deny the coming judgment of God

#### ❖ Reasons why you might fall from your own steadfastness:

- Failing to “beware” - meaning “be defensively aware” (of what?)
- Failing to be aware that you can easily begin to doubt some of the things the bible says
- Failing to be aware that you can forget some of the things the bible says
- Failing to be aware that you can fall into spiritual carelessness in which you will be spiritually dozing
- Failing to be aware that you can be so caught up by worldly things that you don't think on eternal things
- Being led away with the error of the wicked
- This means actually beginning to entertain the ideas of those who question the return of Christ and the future severe judgment of the world

- There are many religious people today who claim to believe in Christ who have:
  - stopped believing that only the word of God keeps the world in a state of stability
  - stopped believing in hell,
  - stopped believing in the judgment of the wicked
- ❖ **So, believers can fall from their own steadfastness by not being defensively aware, and by being led away with the error of the wicked.**

## II. The Second Possible State

- ❖ (You can) “...**grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.**”
  - Grow in grace: What does it mean to grow in grace? First, this Greek word means to wax or enlarge in.
    - Grace is the favor of God. So, Peter seems to be telling us that the door is wide open for us to enlarge in this favor of God. The bible teaches that, through and through.
    - But how is it done? The formula is simple:
      - Jesus Christ is the fulness of God’s grace, and we improve our situation and our spiritual state through Him (**John 1:14-17**).
      - When you improve your life pattern and your spiritual state, it is because you adopt characteristics and behavior that are Christ-like
      - When you look and act more like Christ, God opens the gold vault of favor to you.
      - Christ might be seen as the combination that unlocks God’s treasure store of favor
      - You see, God has given everything to Christ...this makes everything available to you according to **Romans 8:32** “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?”
      - Notice it is “with Him” that we are freely given all things. You have to use the combination...Jesus! When we do that, the door is opened and we may use the favors of God
      - What are those favors? Principally faith, hope, love
      - When we use those favors we GROW (enlarge) in them.
- ❖ **Next, we may grow in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ**
  - I believe these two are inseparable...that is., growing in grace and growing in the knowledge of Christ. Why? Because when we enlarge in the favor of God we actually grow at the same time in our knowledge of our Savior. You can’t exercise the graces of God without learning what Jesus is all about.

**III. Summary:** Children of God may be influenced by the disbelief and skepticism of the world to get careless about their attitude concerning future events planned by the Lord. They may become so influenced by these profane notions and teachings that they stop being dedicated to the truths of God and begin to both think and act like the rest of the world....OR they may continue steadfast in belief that all God has said He will do. By doing that they will actively seek to be like Jesus. By that they will exhibit the characteristics and behavior of Jesus Christ and be able to make use of all the elements of God’s grace.