

## 2 PET. 1:16 – 2:10a

By Ashby L. Camp

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### II. The Body of the Letter (1:16 – 3:13)

#### A. Christ will certainly return, as promised (1:16-21)

1. Peter had a preview of Christ's final glory (1:16-18) – <sup>16</sup>*For not after following cleverly devised myths did we make known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but after becoming eyewitnesses of that one's majesty.* <sup>17</sup>*For he received honor and glory from God [the] Father when such a voice [as this] was conveyed to him by the Majestic Glory: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."* <sup>18</sup>*And we ourselves heard this voice that was conveyed from heaven when being with him on the holy mountain.*

a. NIV omits "For" (*gar*) at the beginning of v. 16 and, in so doing, conceals the connection with the preceding. (This was corrected in the TNIV.) Growth is crucial because it is a key to staying on the path to entering the consummated kingdom, the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (1:11), and staying on that path is so important because the kingdom is definitely going to be consummated. Jesus is for sure coming back to finalize the kingdom he inaugurated at his first coming.

(1) The phrase "power and coming" is probably another hendiadys meaning "coming in power" or "powerful coming."

(2) The "vast majority" of scholars (Bauckham, 215) understand that phrase as a reference to the second coming of Christ. They do so because:

(a) The word Peter uses for coming, *parousia*, was in Christian circles in the first century almost a technical term for the second coming. Indeed, Peter uses it in 3:4 and 3:12 unambiguously in reference to Christ's return.

[1] Moo states (p. 71), "[T]he word 'coming' is used throughout the New Testament as almost a technical term for Christ's return in glory – so much so that the underlying Greek word, *parousia*, has passed into our theological vocabulary."

[2] Schreiner concurs (p. 312), "[I]n the New Testament [the word *parousia*] becomes virtually a technical term for the arrival or future coming of Jesus Christ (Matt 24:3,27,37,39; 1 Cor 15:23; 1 Thess 2:19; 3:13; 4:15; 5:23; 2 Thess 2:1,8; Jas 5:7-8; 2 Pet 3:4,12; 1 John 2:28)."

(b) Christ's return is associated with "power" in Mk. 13:26, Mat. 24:30, and Lk. 21:27 (see also, Mk. 9:1), so the combination of power and coming reinforces the conclusion that Peter is referring to Christ's return.

(c) The denial of the second coming by the false teachers (3:3-4) is central to the letter, so it makes perfect sense that Peter is here defending that doctrine.

b. In assuring his readers of the certainty of the apostolic claim that the Lord Jesus Christ is going to return in great power, which return will be an eschatological climax marked by the final judgment and the creation of the new heavens and new earth, Peter confronts directly the claims of the false teachers. They denied that Christ was returning (3:3-4), and apparently taught that the claim to the contrary was nothing more than a fable or myth, perhaps even alleging that it had been concocted as a tool for restraining behavior by the threat of a final judgment. Moo comments (p. 70):

We do not know precisely why, or on what basis, the false teachers were denying Christ's return. In 3:4-13, Peter puts particular stress on the radical change in the created world that will accompany Christ's return. Probably, then, the false teachers thought that the world would continue on as it now was and denied that there would be any kind of eschatological climax in which good would be rewarded and evil punished. That this was the case seems to be confirmed by Peter's emphasis on the certainty of judgment (see, e.g., 2:3b). And the false teachers' eschatological skepticism was undoubtedly tied to their immoral lifestyle: With no prospect of future judgment, one did not have to worry much about living a righteous life.

We can only speculate about the sources of these false teachers' denial of future eschatology. Certainly many Greek thinkers of Peter's day scorned any notion of divine providential control of history and of life after death. And these errorists may also have been influenced by a "spiritualized" eschatology of a type that Paul also had to deal with: Christians who thought that the final form of the kingdom had already arrived (cf. 1 Cor. 4:8) and that the resurrection had already taken place (2 Tim. 2:18).

c. Peter denies that the message of Christ's glorious return was a cleverly concocted fairy tale. He does so by asserting that he and some others (meaning James and John) were eyewitnesses of Christ's majesty when they were with him on the mountain of transfiguration. So he clearly is saying that what they personally experienced in the transfiguration event somehow disproves the false teachers' claim that the doctrine of the second coming is hogwash. But *how* that experience disproves their denial of Christ's consummating return is less clear.

d. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all suggest that the transfiguration was a fulfillment of Christ's prediction that some of the apostles would not die until they saw a specific manifestation of the coming kingdom of God (Mk. 9:1 – "the kingdom of God

come with power"; Mat. 16:28 – "the Son of man coming in his kingdom"; Lk. 9:28 - "the kingdom of God").

(1) They each preface the transfiguration account with Christ's prediction and then link the transfiguration to it by noting in the very next verse the length of time between the two (Matthew and Mark – six days; Luke – about eight days).

(2) So it is not surprising that, as Jerome Neyrey says in *2 Peter, Jude*, Anchor Bible (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 173, "[i]n the early church there was a widespread interpretation of the transfiguration as the fulfillment of a prophecy made by Jesus that 'those standing here would not taste death until they saw the kingdom of God come in power' (Mark 9:1)."

e. Peter seems to be saying that in seeing in the transfiguration Christ's glorious and majestic nature, in seeing his divinity, they saw the full coming of his kingdom in the sense they saw one who was too great to leave unfinished business, too great to leave creation in its current state of continuing corruption, and thus saw one who necessarily would return powerfully to consummate the kingdom of God, return to fully "cash out" his victory by ushering in the eternal state in which there was no sin, suffering, death, mourning, crying, or pain.

f. That Peter is saying that the second coming was foreshadowed in the transfiguration is recognized by the vast majority of commentators.

(1) For example, Peter Davids states in *The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 202: "2 Peter . . . says that the Transfiguration was a view into the future of the coming exaltation of Jesus, a view of his second coming with power and glory."

(2) Thomas Schreiner states (p. 312): "Peter defended the truth of the coming of Christ in a surprising manner. He appealed to the eyewitness testimony of what occurred at the transfiguration. Apparently he conceived of the transfiguration as a proleptic and prophetic indication of the glory and power of Christ that would be displayed at his future coming."

(3) Douglas Moo states (p. 84): "Peter, James, and John *saw* – not in a vision or a dream, but at a specific time and place in history – Jesus' Parousia glory. And Peter wants us to believe that Christ will come again in glory because he did see this."

(4) Gene Green states (p. 216): "The particular tenet of the heretics' teaching that Peter counters has to do with the eschatological parousia of Christ (v. 16; 3:3-4). He presents the transfiguration, with its revelation of Christ's kingship, as the guarantee of that final event."

2. The prophecies are absolutely reliable (1:19-21) – <sup>19</sup>*And we have the wholly reliable prophetic word, to which you do well in paying attention as to a light shining in a dark place, until [the] day dawns and [the] morning star rises in your hearts,* <sup>20</sup>*knowing this first [of all] that no prophecy of scripture is [a matter] of one's own interpretation.* <sup>21</sup>*For no prophecy ever was brought by [the] will of man; rather, men being moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.*

a. In vv. 16-18 Peter tells them that staying on the path to entering the kingdom that Jesus will consummate at his return is so important *because* ("for") the kingdom definitely is going to be consummated. Jesus is for sure coming back to finish what he began (contrary to what the false teachers were suggesting). And they can know he is coming because Peter, James, and John had an eyewitness preview of that coming in the Transfiguration.

b. And in addition to this eyewitness testimony, they can be certain Christ is returning because they have the wholly reliable prophetic word which testifies to that return.

(1) With the TNIV and NET and several commentators (e.g., Bauckham, Gene Green, Hillyer), I think the comparative adjective βεβαιότερον is best taken here as a superlative or elative (very certain, altogether certain) rather than as a true comparative (more certain).

(2) The term "prophetic word" refers either to the entire Old Testament scriptures, in accordance with a common Jewish view that all inspired scripture is prophetic (note "prophetic scriptures" in Rom. 16:26), or to specific prophecies that are part of the Old Testament. The reference to "prophecy of *Scripture*" in v. 20 makes clear that *writings* are in view.

(3) Peter does not identify any specific texts, but there are a number of passages that early Christians recognized as testifying to the Messiah's coming in judgment and thus as referring to Christ's return (e.g., Ps. 2:9; Dan. 7:13-14; Num. 24:17; see also, Isa. 63:1-6).

c. Peter tells them that they will do well to pay attention to this wholly reliable prophetic word as to a light shining in a dark place. Being wholly reliable, scripture reveals the truth, penetrates the darkness of ignorance and the lies of the devil, and thus provides guidance for one's life. Those who ignore God's word, who do not take advantage of the light of that revelation, will not be prepared for the Lord's return, for the day of judgment.

d. They (and we) are to heed the witness of Scripture until the day dawns and the morning star rises in their hearts.

(1) The "day" of which Peter is speaking is the day of Christ's return; that is the subject of discussion. It is what Peter in 1 Pet. 2:12 calls the

"day of visitation," what he in 2 Pet. 2:9 and 3:7 calls the "day of judgment," what he in 2 Pet. 3:10 calls the "day of the Lord," what he in 2 Pet. 3:12 calls the "day of God," and what he in 2 Pet. 3:18 calls the "day of eternity." It is the day when the kingdom of God will be consummated, when this reality will be "heavenized" into the new heavens and new earth.

(2) At that time, the "morning star," who is Jesus Christ (Rev. 22:16), will rise in our hearts in that our gratitude for and appreciation of him will become even greater as our faith becomes sight. We will, in the vernacular, "be busting."

(3) We heed the witness of Scripture *until* that time because in the brightness of that revelation the prophetic message will be superfluous. As Peter Davids states (p. 210):

This is what Paul said in 1 Cor. 13:8-10, "But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears." Now the prophetic word (in Paul the reference is to the prophecies of contemporary prophets, while in 2 Peter it is to the OT) is a light in the darkness, but when the darkness disappears with the coming of the dawn, we will no longer need the Scriptures. One treasures a love letter while the beloved is absent, but once he or she is present, the letter is laid aside and exchanged for the personal contact.

e. The wholly reliable prophetic word to which they (and we) are to pay attention until Christ returns is wholly reliable because it is from God and not man. It is not the thoughts, opinions, philosophies, or imaginings of the various prophets. Not at all. They were God's instruments who wrote what they wrote under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

(1) We are not told the specifics of how the Spirit supernaturally guided the sacred writers in their choice of words, but we know that he did so in the normal language of their day and consistently with their differing personalities and styles of writing. So the process often was more complicated and subtler than a writer recording the dictated words of God.

(2) As I noted earlier, Luke investigated things before he wrote his Gospel; he didn't sit in a trance and write. The point is that God superintended the entire process so that the end product was precisely what he wanted written.

## B. The false teachers (2:1-22)

1. The presence and impact of false teachers (2:1-3) – *But there were also false prophets among the people, as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing*

*swift destruction on themselves. <sup>2</sup>And many will follow their licentious acts, because of whom the way of truth will be slandered. <sup>3</sup>And in greed they will exploit you with false words, for whom the condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.*

a. As there were false prophets among the people of Israel in the days of the true prophets to whom Peter he has just referred, so it was foretold that there also would be false teachers among them, as has now occurred; that prediction is now playing out in their community.

(1) As I stated in the introduction, it is clear that the heretics were already on the scene. They were already feasting with the church (2:13) and were seeking converts from among its members (2:14, 19). They had perverted Paul's teaching (3:15-16) and were ignoring fundamental Christian truth (3:5-7). I am with those who think Peter probably refers to the false teachers in the future tense here to remind his readers that the false teachers' presence is fulfillment of earlier Christian prophecies warning about their rise (e.g., Mat. 7:15, 24:11; see also, Acts 20:29-31; 2 Tim. 3:1-9; Deut. 13:2-6). Schreiner states (p. 327), "He reminded his hearers that the advent of the false teachers was foreknown beforehand and hence that God reigns even in such perilous times."

(2) Peter refers to these heretics as false teachers rather than false prophets. Since prophets do indeed teach, perhaps this is just a stylistic variation, another way of referring to false prophets. It is also possible that Peter used the word "teachers" because, though these heretics were within the scope of the earlier prophecy, they did not claim prophetic authority (perhaps because they rejected the very notion of inspiration).

(3) Even if these heretics did not claim prophetic authority, they shared characteristics of the false prophets of old. As Richard Bauckham summarizes the characteristics of false prophets, they lack divine authority, they promise people peace when God threatens judgment, and they will certainly be judged by God.

b. Peter says the false teachers secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them.

(1) They are devious in their method. Since they are called "arrogant men" in 2:10b, they probably did not hide what they taught but instead they covered up the degree to which their teaching differed from the accepted apostolic teaching (Moo, 92).

(2) The errors they push are so serious that they lead to destruction, meaning eschatological punishment. "Any who buy into them find themselves on the road to eternal condemnation" (Moo, 99). One is reminded of Paul's words to the Galatians in Gal. 1:8-9 (ESV): "But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. <sup>9</sup> As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you

received, let him be accursed." Moo says (p. 93) regarding the word "destructive" (lit. "of destruction"):

This word refers to eschatological condemnation. As a metaphor for judgment, the word does not carry the literal meaning of "annihilate" or "cease to exist," but, with "salvation" as its opposite (2 Cor. 2:15), denotes the eternal loss of fellowship with God (see also John 12:25; Rom. 14:15; 1 Cor. 1:18; 8:11; 2 Cor. 4:3; 2 Thess. 2:10). . . . Those who follow the theology of the false teachers will be led not to final salvation but to condemnation.

(3) They denied Christ, who bought them as his slaves through his atoning death on the cross. They are Christians who have now turned from the Lord. In denying his second coming and living immoral lives, these heretics were denying Jesus' lordship. And as Jesus said in Mat. 10:33, "Whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven."

c. In bringing in these destructive heresies, the false teachers bring on themselves the eschatological judgment that will fall suddenly on them in the end.

d. Peter says that many will follow the false teachers by adopting their licentious ways.

(1) Moo remarks (p. 94), "Sadly, there are always those within the church who are attracted to new and different teaching, especially if, like the ideas peddled by these false teachers, it removes the bounds of moral constraint and accountability to a holy judge."

(2) The problem of false teaching becomes even more acute as popular culture increasingly swallows the notion that there is no objective truth. In that environment, Christians easily become more comfortable witnessing for their faith not in terms of its truth but in terms of its utility – e.g., it helped my family, helped my self image, etc. – which makes us less concerned about the truth. Moo states (p. 98), "Such a situation provides a golden opportunity for false teachers to enter our ranks and prey on those who simply do not know much about what they believe or why."

e. Those who follow the false teachers in their sinful ways will cause the way of truth, Christianity, to be slandered or blasphemed. When people see those who wear the name Christ living in sin and rationalizing it, the Christian faith is discredited.

f. The false teachers are motivated by greed. They are exploiting the believers' vulnerability by feeding them lies they are willing, if not eager, to lap up and apparently are receiving some economic benefit in the process.

g. The judgment planned for these false teachers from long ago is not idle, meaning it was not suspended but is still advancing despite their claim that the length

of Christ's absence means it will not happen (3:4). Their destruction is not asleep, and thus will not sleep through its hour, but will come in God's time.

h. Moo's comments (p. 98-99) on the contemporary significance of this text are worth quoting at length:

The challenge [of false teaching] is especially great because, as Peter reminds us, false teachers are often deceptive, mixing enough truth with their error so that well-meaning but uninformed Christians will be taken in by them. I think at this point of some of the more radical "health-and-wealth" gospel advocates on TV and radio. . . .

Perhaps, then, the most significant point of application to emerge from this paragraph in our own day is the assumption that Peter makes about the utterly disastrous consequences of false teaching. . . .

The specific false teaching Peter is addressing seems to have had its basis in a doctrinal error – denial of the return of Christ in judgment (see 1:16-21; 3:3-10) – and to have led to serious moral failings (see the "shameful ways" of 2:2, 10-22). But application of Peter's warnings should not be confined to this one particular "heresy." . . . Any denial of clearly revealed biblical truth falls under the strictures that Peter gives here. Thus, as much as we may respect the moral seriousness of Mormons, for instance, their denial of the deity of Christ puts their doctrine into the category that Peter discusses here. Examples can be multiplied endlessly; and false teaching, while taking many similar forms throughout history, is always emerging with new nuances and permutations of errors. But it is the broad principle that we must latch hold of here: What we *believe* matters – and matters eternally.

What we are advocating is not a "heresy hunt" – becoming so ultrasensitive to every fine nuance of expression that we read people out of the kingdom on the basis of the most subtle theological differences. . . . Yet as much as we may deplore the way some Christians have been too eager to brand those who disagree with them as heretics, we should at least recognize that they have a sense of the importance of truth.

2. Contrasting fates of the rebellious and the godly (2:4-10a) – <sup>4</sup>*For if God did not spare angels who sinned but delivered into chains of gloomy darkness those being held for judgment, casting them into Tartarus;* <sup>5</sup>*and [if] he did not spare the ancient world but, having brought a flood [on] a world of ungodly people, protected Noah, [as the] eighth, a preacher of righteousness;* <sup>6</sup>*and [if] he condemned [the] cities of Sodom and Gomorrah [to destruction], reducing [them] to ashes and making [them] an example of what is coming to [the] ungodly;* <sup>7</sup>*and [if] he rescued righteous Lot who was distressed by the conduct of the lawless in [their] licentiousness* <sup>8</sup>*(for while living among them, that righteous man was tormenting [his] righteous soul day after day in seeing and hearing their lawless deeds);* <sup>9</sup>*[then the] Lord knows [how] to rescue godly people from a trial and [how] to keep [the] unrighteous for punishment in [the] day of judgment –* <sup>10</sup>*especially those who go after [the] flesh in [the] lust of defilement and who despise authority.*

a. The notion that God will allow rebellion and sin to go unpunished is shown to be false by his prior judgments of sin. He did not spare certain rebellious angels from judgment, did not spare the ungodly world of Noah's day from judgment, and did not spare the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah from judgment. So why should anyone think the false teachers and their followers will be spared from judgment? On the other hand, God did protect Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and his family from the flood and rescued righteous Lot from the incineration of Sodom and Gomorrah.

b. Peter makes his points through an extended "if . . . then" formula. According to v. 9, if, as is true, God cast certain sinful angels into Tartarus to be held for judgment, flooded the world of ungodly people but protected Noah, incinerated Sodom and Gomorrah as an example of what is coming to the ungodly, and rescued Lot (vv. 4-8), then at least two things can be concluded: God is quite capable of rescuing godly people from a trial and is likewise capable of holding the unrighteous for punishment in the day of judgment.

(1) The fact God knows how to rescue the godly person from the trial or test of judgment, how to bring the faithful through that sifting event without destruction, is an encouragement to the faithful, those who believe in the coming judgment. There is no chance that the coming judgment will be indiscriminate, that it will take the righteous with the wicked, so there is every reason for them to continue to resist the false teachers' encouragement to immoral living.

(a) The flood from which Noah was protected and the incineration of cities from which Lot was rescued were acts of divine judgment, and Peter ties the word "trial" to the judgment from which Lot was spared by repeating the word "rescue" (ῥύομαι): God "*rescued* righteous Lot" [from the incineration of the cities] and thus "knows how to *rescue* godly people from a *trial*." So it seems that the trial from which the godly will be rescued is an act of divine judgment, and the act of divine judgment of which he is speaking, the judgment that will punish the false teachers and their followers, is the final judgment at Christ's return, which the false teachers denied.

(b) 1 Pet. 4:17 Peter indicates that in the persecution of Christians God is beginning his judgment of humanity starting from the church. Whereas the purpose of that judgment in terms of the church is to test it, to allow the genuineness and purity of its faith to shine through (see 1 Pet. 4:12, 1:6-7), the purpose of that judgment when it later falls on unbelievers at the return of Christ will be to condemn and punish them. Here I think Peter applies to the *final* judgment the notion of testing as that phase of the judgment relates to the church. As the faithful, the righteous, are rescued from condemnation, their faith is exhibited as genuine and pure.

(c) Lot was not without fault, but his righteousness is implied in the Genesis account by Abraham's declaration in 18:25 that the Lord does not destroy the righteous with the wicked and Lot's subsequent rescue from Sodom and Gomorrah in chapter 19. It also is implied by Lot's being the only one in the city who

offered hospitality to the visiting angels and his defending them (whatever one thinks of his offering his daughters in that cause) when the entire town insisted that he turn them over for sexual relations. His righteousness was recognized in one stream of post-biblical Jewish tradition (e.g., Wisdom of Solomon 10:6, 19:17) and in the early church (e.g., 1 Clement 11:1).

[1] Notice how Peter emphasizes Lot's distress and torment over the sin around him as a reflection of his righteousness.

[2] In America, no-fault divorce, abortion, homosexual conduct, and sexual immorality of all kinds have come to be accepted in the brief span of four or five decades. Rather than being distressed and tormented by this decadence, too many Christians have become insensitive to it and even accepted it as a valid personal choice. As Moo states (p. 118):

This muted reaction to ever more rampant sin is fraught with danger not only for society but for the church. As Cardinal Newman, the nineteenth-century Roman Catholic theologian, put it, "Our great security against sin lies in being shocked by it." When we are shocked at something, we avoid it at all costs. . . . But when sin loses its "shock value," it can too easily become something we tolerate and then fall prey to ourselves.

Moo adds that we do not find more Christians distressed by the sin that rages around us because "we do not sufficiently share God's own horror at it" and "[w]e care too little about this world we live in."

(2) The fact God knows how to hold the unrighteous for punishment until his chosen time, until in the day of judgment, means that no ungodly people will avoid judgment, even if they die before the Lord returns. None of them will slip through the judgment net, however long it takes for that day to come. He adds that this is especially true of those who indulge the flesh in lust and despise authority, referring to the false teachers. So again, there is every reason for his audience to continue to resist the false teachers' encouragement to immoral living.

c. The examples of God's judgment of the ungodly in the flood and in the incineration of Sodom and Gomorrah are well known biblical occurrences, but his casting of sinning angels into Tartarus to be held for judgment in v. 4 is not described in Scripture. Since Peter assumes his audience knows and accepts this story, it must be a story of some notoriety and weight.

(1) Some believe Peter is referring to the initial fall of Satan and other angels who chose to rebel against God. But even if one can read a fall of Satan out of Isa. 14:12-20 and Ezek. 28:1-19, which is doubtful, and can infer a fall from the existence of demons (fallen angels) in what originally was a very good creation, it is much more likely in the context of first-century Judaism that Peter is referring to a subset

of fallen angels, those who were confined to Tartarus in distinction from those who were not.

(2) Michael Green states (p. 110), "Tartarus, in Greek mythology, was the place of punishment for the departed spirits of the very wicked, particularly rebellious gods like Tantalus. Just as Paul could quote an apt verse of the pagan poet Aratus (Acts 17:28), so could Peter make use of this Homeric imagery." The word was used in the LXX of Job 40:20 and Prov. 30:16 for some kind of netherworld or realm of spirits (Davids, 226).

(3) As the vast majority of commentators conclude, Peter probably is alluding to a traditional Jewish understanding and elaboration of Gen. 6:1-4. According to that understanding, the "sons of God" refers to certain angels who married and procreated with human women and who consequently were confined to a dreadful spiritual realm awaiting final judgment.

(a) This was a widespread (but not uniform) understanding of that text in first-century Judaism. It is frequently reflected in extrabiblical Jewish literature of the period, most extensively in *1 Enoch*, which book is expressly cited by Jude in vv. 14-15.

(b) Since Jude without question knew *1 Enoch* and speaks in v. 6 of an angelic judgment that is consistent with *1 Enoch*, he very likely shared *1 Enoch's* understanding that Gen. 6:1-4 involved angels who sinned. Schreiner adds (p. 336), "It is quite unlikely that Peter veered off in another direction from Jude, for regardless of the question of literary dependence, it is obvious that Jude and 2 Peter both drew from common tradition in some form."

(c) If the angelic sin to which Peter refers is based on the popular Jewish understanding of Gen. 6:1-4, then the examples are given in the order in which they appear in Genesis: angelic sin (Gen. 6:1-4), the flood (Gen. 6:5-8:22), Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19).

(d) Peter's wording echoes the language of the popular Jewish understanding. For example, *1 Enoch* 10:4 speaks of binding a disobedient angel hand and foot and throwing him "into the darkness."

(e) The dominant view in the early church was that Gen. 6:1-4 referred to angels who had sinned. According to Sydney H. T. Page in *Powers of Evil: A Biblical Study of Satan and Demons* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 47, this view was held by Justin Martyr (c. 100-c. 165), Clement of Alexandria (c.150-c.215), Tertullian (c.160-c.225), Lactantius (c.240-c.320), and Ambrose (c.339-c.397). He states, "This view held the field in the East until early in the third century, when it was rejected by Julius Africanus (c.160-c.240), and in the West until much later."

(3) If Peter is indeed referring to this popular understanding of Gen. 6:1-4 in first-century Judaism, it does not mean that he (or Jude) endorses all of that understanding. He speaks only of the angels' sin and their punishment and thus may only be endorsing that angels married and procreated with human women and are held for final judgment in an unpleasant spiritual realm as a consequence of doing so. He by inspiration acknowledges that those aspects of the extrabiblical tradition are correct, which is all he needed for his point. He says nothing about how the angels executed their sin and nothing about their offspring being giants or their sin being responsible for the flood.

(4) Angels procreating with human women certainly strikes us as bizarre. God sometimes dispatches *faithful* angels in human form, but unless Gen. 6:1-4 is an exception, demons, fallen angels, never in Scripture become or appear to become physical so as to be visible to all.

a. The serpent in the Garden was clearly animated by Satan, the prince of demons, but the serpent was one of the wild animals God had made (Gen. 3:1). The only other times Satan or demons are seen are in visions (Zech. 3:1; Mat. 4:9-10; Rev. 9, 12:7-9, 16:12-16, 18:1-3), and the only time we are told anything of their appearance is in Revelation 9 (nightmarish locusts and fiendish cavalry), 12 (Satan portrayed as a great red dragon), and 16:12-16 (frogs).

b. In the popular Jewish understanding of Gen. 6:1-4, the fallen angels took human form, but neither Peter nor Jude says anything about that aspect of the tradition. It is possible that the fallen angels married human women and procreated with them by possessing human males rather than by materialization. Perhaps that was sufficient to satisfy their lust for the women, which lust is implied in Gen. 6:2 (the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive).

(5) Jesus' statement in Mat. 22:30 that angels neither marry nor are given in marriage does not rule out the possibility of demons marrying human women. His statement may be referring only to faithful angels rather than fallen ones or only to what happens in heaven rather than on earth.

(6) As I noted in teaching 1 Peter, accepting this view of Gen. 6:1-4 does not require one to conclude that 1 Pet. 3:19-20 refers to a declaration made to these imprisoned angels. As Wayne Grudem states in *1 Peter*, Tyndale New Testament Commentary (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 212:

Our understanding of this point is not crucial, for one could be convinced that Peter's readers all thought that Genesis 6:2, 4 referred to fallen angels who took human wives and still hold that 1 Peter 3:19-20 spoke of human beings who disobeyed during the building of the ark. (Peter does not, of course, say 'he preached to the spirits in prison who disobeyed by marrying human women' but rather 'spirits . . . who disobeyed when the ark was being built'.)