

2 Peter 3:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

Analysis

Chapter 3, verse 16 - Comprehensive theological analysis. Peter continues his urgent apostolic warning about the dangers facing the church. This verse contributes crucial insights to understanding false teachers' characteristics, God's judgment patterns, and believers' proper response. The Greek terminology reveals theological precision in Peter's argument, emphasizing both divine sovereignty in salvation and human responsibility in sanctification.

The immediate context connects to Peter's broader argument about maintaining doctrinal purity and moral integrity while awaiting Christ's return. Greek word studies illuminate the specific nature of the threats Peter identifies and the resources God provides for perseverance. This passage resonates with Old Testament prophetic warnings, Jesus' teaching about false prophets, and Paul's pastoral instructions, demonstrating biblical theology's consistency across testaments and authors.

Christ-centered interpretation reveals how this verse ultimately points to Jesus as the standard for truth, the source of power for godly living, and the coming Judge who will vindicate the faithful and condemn the wicked. The eschatological dimension reminds believers that present struggles occur within the larger framework of redemptive history culminating in Christ's glorious return and the establishment of the new heavens and new earth.

Historical Context

The first-century church faced unique challenges from both pagan Greco-Roman culture and Jewish opposition, while also contending with internal threats from false teachers who distorted apostolic doctrine. Peter writes in the shadow of Nero's persecution (AD 64-68) and his own approaching martyrdom, making this letter his urgent final testament to the churches. Early Gnostic influences promoting secret knowledge, antinomian ethics, and denial of Christ's physical return created the specific heresies Peter addresses.

Understanding the social, religious, and philosophical context of the Roman Empire illuminates Peter's concerns and arguments. The delay of Christ's parousia created pastoral challenges as expectations of imminent return gave way to questions about timing and certainty. Jewish apocalyptic literature, Greco-Roman moral philosophy, and mystery religions all influenced how different groups understood salvation, ethics, and eschatology, requiring apostolic clarification to maintain orthodox Christianity.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does this verse challenge compromises you might be tempted to make for cultural acceptance or personal comfort?
2. What practices would help you grow in discernment to recognize and resist false teaching in its contemporary forms?
3. How should the certainty of Christ's return and judgment shape your priorities, relationships, and use of time and resources?

Interlinear Text

ώς καὶ ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ἐπιστολαῖς λαλῶν ἐν αὐτῶν
As also in all G3588 his epistles speaking in them
G5613 G2532 G1722 G3956 G1992 G2980 G1722 G846

περὶ τούτων ἐν ᾧ ἐστιν δυσνόητά τινα
of these things in which are hard to be understood some things
G4012 G5130 G1722 G3739 G2076 G1425 G5100

ἄνθρωποι ἀμαθεῖς καὶ ἀστήρικτοι στρεβλοῦσιν
which G3588 they that are unlearned also unstable wrest
G3739 G261 G2532 G793 G4761

ώς καὶ τὰς λοιπὰς γραφὰς πρὸς τὴν ἰδίαν αὐτῶν
As also G3588 the other scriptures unto G3588 own them
G5613 G2532 G3062 G1124 G4314 G2398 G846

ἀπώλειαν
destruction
G684

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 15:6 (Word): And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.

Hebrews 5:11 (Parallel theme): Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing.

2 Peter 2:14 (Parallel theme): Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children:

James 1:8 (Parallel theme): A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.

Philippians 3:19 (Parallel theme): Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)

Jeremiah 23:36 (Word): And the burden of the LORD shall ye mention no more: for every man's word shall be his burden; for ye have perverted the words of the living God, of the LORD of hosts our God.

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