

2 PETER

verse by verse



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Bible Study Guide

From the leadership development ministry of

FELLOWSHIP BIBLE CHURCH MISSIONS

Acknowledgments

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02/05/07
Revision 1

2 Peter

Introduction

- Our world is filled with cult leaders, religious scams, and others who would lead people astray. Estimates of the number of cults worldwide run as high as ten thousand. Some of these cults and many false teachers have even infiltrated the church.
- The first letter of Peter was written to Christians facing persecution. Thus, 1 Peter reviews the person and work of Christ and stresses comfort and hope. But 2 Peter was written to counter false teachers who had infiltrated the church. The best way to counter-act false teaching is to know the truth which is the emphasis of this second epistle. A key word in the book of 2 Peter is “knowledge”, and is used 13 times.
- Written from Rome in approximately A.D. 67, Peter wrote his final words urging believers to reject false teachers and to hold fast to the truth. Peter knew that he was about to die: ***‘I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body, because I know that I will soon put it aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. And I will make every effort to see that after my departure you will always be able to remember these things’ (1:13-14 NIV).*** With death in sight, Peter reminded his readers of their great heritage and urged them to look forward to the Day of the Lord. Soon thereafter, Peter fell victim to Nero.



Chapter 1

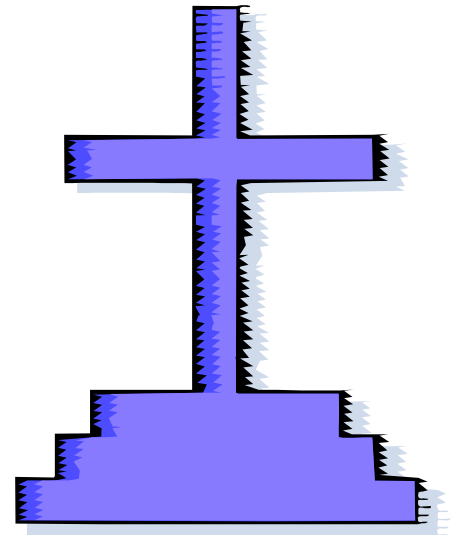
A. Peter's Greeting – 1:1-2

2 Peter 1:1 “Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to them who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ.”

- **“Simon Peter”** In contrast to **1 Peter 1:1**, this letter begins with the names *Simon Peter*. Peter comes from *Petros*, the Greek translation of the Aramaic word *cephas*, meaning, “stone.” Jesus had given this name to Simon: “Jesus looked at [Simon] and said, ‘You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas’ (which, when translated, is Peter)” (**John 1:42 NIV**). The Gospels do not present Peter as rock solid, but he became a solid rock in the days of the early church, as we learn in the book of Acts.
- **“Simon Peter, a servant ... of Jesus Christ.”** Peter identified himself first as a *bondservant*, then as an apostle of *Jesus Christ*. The word translated “bondservant” (*doulos*) means “slave,” one that is subject to the will and wholly at the disposal of his master. It’s interesting to consider that a *bondservant* was a willing servant. One who had been set free by his master but chose to return and serve him willingly.
- **“Simon Peter, ... an apostle of Jesus Christ”.** The title “apostle” designated his apostolic position as leader and one of the twelve original disciples (see **Matthew 10:2; John 20:21-23**). Even more than a title of authority, “apostle” means one sent on a mission, an ambassador. Peter and the other apostles (including Paul, see **Romans 1:1**) had been chosen, called, and given the authority and responsibility to evangelize the world. **“Servant/Apostle”** – Both of these words together bring to mind a very important characteristic of a Christian leader; **“Servant-leadership”**.
 - Possibly, the best term to describe a Godly, Biblical leader is this term “servant-leader”. There are many different thoughts regarding what a godly leader looks like. Some typical images of leaders, which are common in our society, are a drill sergeant, football coach, corporation executive, orchestra conductor, dictator, etc.



- And now some qualities that we associate with these leaders; (strength, authority, power, dominance, decisiveness, superiority, intelligence, one who is never wrong, nor has needs).
- **Mark 10: 42-45** – Servant-leader – **Jn. 13:1-16, 34** The servant-leader focuses on giving of self – **Phil. 2:3-4** – O.T. example **Gen. 13:5-12**. The servant-leader does not lord authority over others, but willingly serves the needs of all. (**1 Pet. 5:2-3; 2 Cor. 4:10-12; 2 Cor. 12:14-15; Act. 20:17-35**).
- It would appear that great leaders are modest, humble servants. But how? In this extremely self-centered world, how can one become a humble, servant-leader? Like everything else in the Christian life, it is simply another gift from God; it's all by grace.
- Becoming a servant-leader is as much a matter of grace, as salvation...And faith is always the only condition on the human side. Everything in the Christian life is freely given to us (**Rom. 8:32**). Nevertheless, it costs...It costs us nothing...Yet it costs us everything...Because the cross stands at the entrance to the Christian life, it's this way, or not at all....
- In **Mark 8:31-35**, notice **verse 34** – We must deny/die to self which can only take place at the cross. Something to keep in mind is that promotion to leadership positions comes only from God – (**Ps. 75:5-7; Rom. 13:1**). However, we must remember that exaltation by God only comes at the cross.
- Our example is Christ Himself. (**Phil. 2:8-9; Phil. 2:5-7**).
- The lower we go with Jesus into death, the higher we go with Him in resurrection. Without the death of self, which can only take place at the cross, our lives will only produce the deeds of the flesh. (**Gal. 5:19-21**)...Keep in mind that the very best that the flesh can ever produce is self-righteousness.... Only those who embrace **Romans 6** can become confidently modest, humble, servant-leaders that walk by faith...
- **“To them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Savior, Jesus Christ.”** The words *them* and *us* refers to those who were not apostles and to the apostles themselves (of whom Peter was one). All those believers who had received the same kind of faith as the

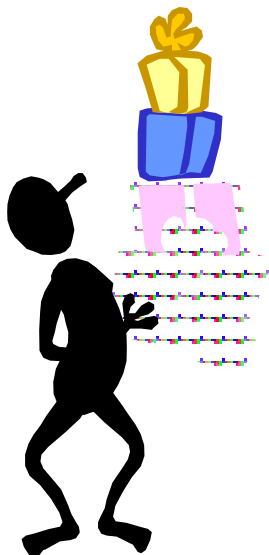


apostles' faith and had received it from the same source: through *the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ*. The apostles had been eyewitnesses of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. Some second and third-generation Christians may have been concerned that somehow their faith was inferior. But Peter reassured them that their faith was equal to the faith of the apostles; it was just as precious and just as sure, for it was faith that was obtained through God's righteousness, not through any right-doing of man (**Romans 1:17; 3:21-22**).

2 Peter 1:2 “Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus, our Lord.”

- The first part of Peter's greeting here is identical to **1 Peter 1:2** and similar to Paul's repeated comment in each of his letters from Romans to Philemon. *Grace* is God's unmerited favor; *peace* is the “fruit of the Spirit”. The Bible actually speaks of three different types of peace:
 1. peace with God, (**Rom. 5:1**)
 2. peace from God, (**Rom. 1:7**)
 3. peace of God, (**Col. 3:15**).
- These persecuted and suffering believers may have been feeling very little grace and an absence of peace. Therefore Peter reassured them that both grace and peace would not just be added, but multiplied, and be theirs *in abundance*. How? *Through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord*. The Greek word ‘*ginosko*’ is the normal verb for “know.” When used with the prepositional prefix ‘*epi*’, the meaning becomes “comprehend thoroughly, know exactly.” This “knowledge is a progression/growth that is best explained in **Proverbs 24:3-4**, and appears to be a three step process which we will explain more fully with the commentary on Chapter 1 verse 5.

B. God has given us all things



2 Peter 1:3 – “According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue;”

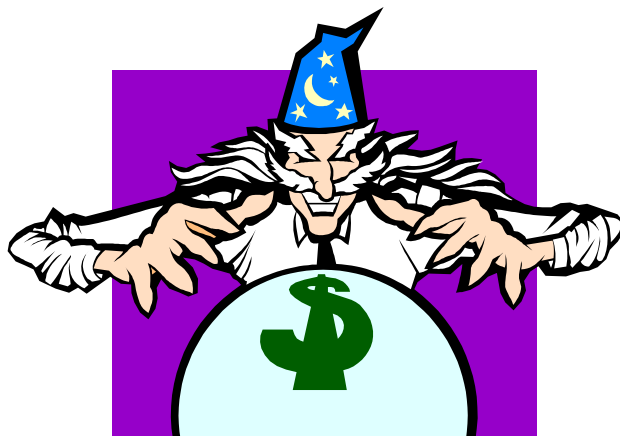
- Peter refers not to information about religion, nor cross-cultural seminars about differences between “faith” and “isms,” but to genuine, honest, personal, solid, life-changing, dynamic eye-openness to the true God Himself, “the knowledge of Him.” (**John 17:3; Ephesians 4:13**) There is nothing in this verse about man, other than being the recipient of God's grace. Notice that it is God's power that has given (that's grace) to man everything

needed for life (physical) and Godliness/God-likeness (spiritual), but take note how it comes: “through the knowledge of Him.”

- What’s at the center of this knowledge? God Himself; not just knowing about Him, but knowing Him, or as Paul comments in **Eph. 4:20** “learn Christ”. The phrase...‘*who called us by His own glory and goodness*’ explains what attracts people to Jesus. Jesus’ glory (the impact of who He is, His splendor) and His goodness, grace, mercy and love to sinful man is what draws sinful, people to Him.
- “Called” means we believers are chosen (see **1 Peter 1:2, 15: 2:9, 21; 3:9; 5:10**). We are called to God for salvation and then to be molded/changed into His image. Keep in mind that the call of God is always to Himself, some scriptures to consider: **Matt. 4:18-20; Mark 3:13-14; 6:7**.

2 Peter 1:4 - “By which are given unto us exceedingly great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”

- Continuing from his thought in **1:3**, Peter explained it was through His divine power, and through the knowledge of Him that Christ has bestowed *His very great and precious promises*, so that through these promises, believers *may participate in the divine nature*.
- How can we “participate”? To believers who are growing into Christ-likeness, Christ has granted a portion of His goodness (moral excellence) in this life. That participation in the divine nature begins with our new birth and extends into eternal glory. How can we “participate”? Believers are unified with Christ and share His nature (**Rom 8:28-29** – “*molded into His image*”).
- There are two very important terms in the New Testament; “**In Christ**”, and “**Christ in you**”. No wonder Peter called these “**very great and precious promises**”! In his first letter, Peter had written, “**You have been born anew, not of perishable, but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God**” (**1 Peter 1:23** NRSV). After our new birth, we begin to take hold experientially of all the things promised to us as children of God. There is no way to appropriate these all at once; it happens over time, **Galatians 2:20**.
- Being a partaker of the Divine Nature also enables believers to *escape the*



corruption in the world caused by evil desires. Many first-century false teachers emphasized a secret “knowledge” of God; such people were called Gnostics (from the Greek word for “knowledge”). Gnosticism undermined Christianity in several basic ways:

1. it insisted that important secret knowledge was hidden from most believers;
 2. it taught that the physical body was evil;
 3. it contended that Christ only “seemed” to be human, but was not.
- While these false teachers spoke about secret knowledge, Peter wrote of “knowing” Jesus Christ. Peter used their language to explain that all their conclusions were incorrect; people escape corruption and partake in the divine nature by God’s gift.

C. The seven virtues/fruits/qualities

2 Peter 1:5-7 - “And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; And to knowledge, self control; and to self control, patience; and to patience, godliness; And to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love.”

- “And besides this” refers to all that Peter has written in verse 1- 4. **“Giving all diligence”** could be translated “give careful consideration to the following: add to your faith virtue/purity.” As mentioned elsewhere, the Christian life begins and ends with faith (**Rom. 1:17**).
- And so Peter begins with faith and then presents seven virtues/fruit that appear to be progressive and develop out of our faith in Christ:

1. The first is virtue or purity and is a direct product of our faith in our co-

crucifixion with Christ (**Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20**). In **Is. 6:1-7**, Isaiah reveals to us his experience as he drew near to God; God was like a mirror reflecting Isaiah’s sinfulness and in verse 5 he says *“woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips.”* With that, the Lord dispatched an angel having a live coal to lay upon Isaiah’s lips. This could be seen as an Old Testament physical picture of



our occupation with Christ which exposes the flesh and our need for the cross, to purge us of our sin and in it’s place comes purity.

2. The next virtue or fruit is knowledge. From **Prov. 24:3, 4** we learn *“by wisdom a house is built, by understanding it is established, and by knowledge the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches.”* There is apparently a progression, which begins with wisdom. A definition for wisdom is “looking at life from God’s point of view;” as we begin to look at life from God’s point of view, our spiritual house is built. It goes on to say, *“by understanding, it is established”*. As I look back on my Christian life, there was a point in my growth process where I was looking at life from God’s point of view. And all of a sudden I came to a crossroads in life and it was as if God was saying, “Ok, you’ve seen these biblical principles and now it’s time to apply them to your life.” I can remember at one point thinking about the scripture that says if you exalt yourself, I’ll humble you, but if you humble yourself, I’ll exalt you. I came to a place where I was faced with that situation. I was thinking, “The world tells me that I’ve got to look out for number one. I’ve got to reach out for all the gusto I can.” But the scripture says quite the opposite. I decided on that particular day, I was going to go with God: I was going to humble myself and see what God would do. As I applied that scripture to my life, I saw what God did and I said, “Now I understand.” The final phase of **Proverbs 24** is *“by knowledge the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches.”* The word for knowledge can be defined “familiarity gained through experience.” You’ve looked at it from God’s point of view, which is wisdom; you’ve applied it to your life and you understand, and now you know. When we get to this point nothing can shake us off that rock of truth. (**James 3:13**)
3. **“...and to knowledge, self control.”** Then there was this big issue of self-control. It was such a struggle for me personally because I had a problem with anger. Oftentimes I would find myself in a situation where someone would say something to me and I would get very frustrated, impatient and angry. But as my faith grew in my co-crucifixion with Christ, I began to see the Holy Spirit was holding the flesh in the place of death. Now someone would say something and the anger would immediately come up on the inside, but I could control it on the outside. There was a control that started with an outward control, but as I continued to walk by faith and to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord, there came an inner self-control.
4. **“... and to self control, patience;”** Keep in mind that both self control and patience are fruit of the Spirit (**Gal. 5:22-23**) As I continued growing and seeing self control in my life, now the situations that were causing anger seemed rather trivial, and there was a growing patience with those unreasonable people in my life. Rather than going off having controlled my external anger but inwardly frustrated, all of a sudden there was a peace and patience with them.

5. **“...and to patience, godliness;”** Our definition of godliness is “God-likeness.” Godliness is not man imitating God, but rather God reproducing Himself in a man. Christ-likeness is not a man imitating Christ; it’s Christ reproducing Himself in a man. When we look deeper at this term “Godliness”, it’s the idea that God is actually living His life in and through us. As we grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ we will begin to see this progression of our faith producing purity, and knowledge, and self control, and patience, and God-likeness.

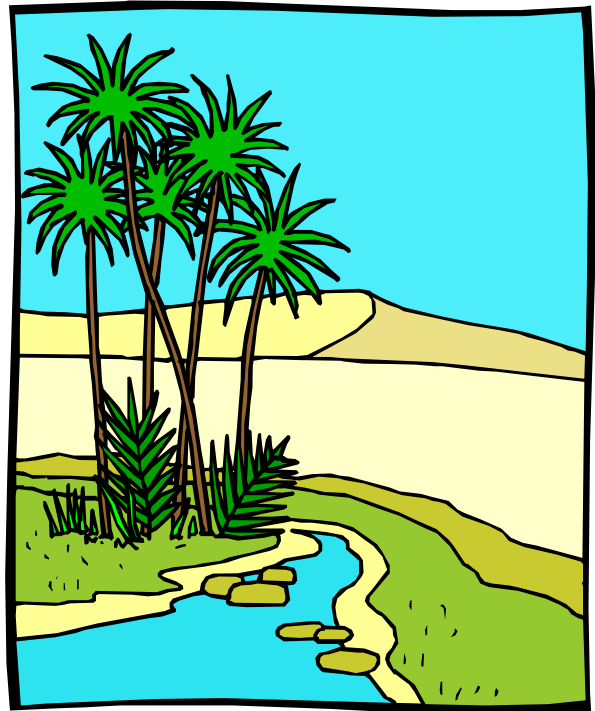
6. **“...and to godliness, brotherly kindness;”** It’s interesting that one of the first things most new Christians want to see in their lives is brotherly kindness; love for other Christians. Looking at this progression, there is considerable spiritual growth that must take place before we will experience true brotherly kindness toward one another. In **I John 2:9-11**, *“He that says he is in the light (abiding in Christ) and hates his brother is in darkness even unto now. He that loves his brother, abides in the light and there is no occasion of stumbling in Christ. But he that hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness and knows not where he goes because the darkness has blinded his eyes”*. What John is communicating is that unless we are abiding in Christ, which is a maturing process; unless we have grown spiritually to a point where we are occupied with Christ, there will be many times when we fail in loving another Christian. Why is that? A lack of spiritual maturity; the person who is unloving or even bitter toward his brother is basically walking in darkness, walking in the flesh.



7. **“And to brotherly kindness, love.”** Keep in mind that the characteristics of love are best seen in **I Cor 13**; *“love is patient, love is kind, love doesn’t act unbecomingly, love doesn’t seek it’s own, love is not easily provoked.”* Back to 2 Peter and thinking of the characteristics of love; love is patient, and Peter speaks of patience. Love is not easily provoked, and Peter mentions self-control. Love does not seek it’s own which is a picture of Godliness; (Christ gave up the majesty of being God and became a servant and humbled Himself to the point of death). **John 15:13**, *“Greater love has no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friend”*.

2 Peter 1:8 – “For if these things be in you, and abound (are increasing), they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

- **“If these things be in you and are increasing;...”** When we look at our lives do we see that our faith is increasing as well as our purity and knowledge, self control, patience, brotherly kindness, godliness (god-likeness), and love? If we can see that these are a part of our lives and are increasing, then Peter says we will no longer live barren and unfruitful lives.
- Let’s give some thought to the words, barren and unfruitful. Back in **2 Kings 2** there’s an interesting story. Elisha has come into this certain city and the men of the city said to Elisha, (**vs. 19**), *“Behold, I pray thee the situation of the city is pleasant as my Lord sees it, but the water is naught and the ground is barren.”* As Elisha looked over this city it looked beautiful. It was springtime, everything was growing and budding. To the eyes the men said it looked very pleasant. However, underneath all that beauty, the water was stagnant and the ground is barren. The word ‘barren’ has the idea of a miscarriage. Everything is growing, the fruit is on the trees, everything looks beautiful, but then just as the fruit is about to ripen, it prematurely falls to the ground to rot and die. Thinking back to **2 Peter**, oftentimes our lives are barren and unfruitful. In **2 Kings** Elisha said, *“Bring to me a new cruse and put salt in it”* (Salt is an Old Testament picture of the risen Jesus Christ). So he said, *“Bring me the cruse of salt.”* And they brought it to him and in **verse 21**, *“He went forth unto the spring of the waters and cast the salt in.”* He said, *“thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters. There shall not be any more death or barren land.”* Notice he went back to the spring, to the source of the water and threw the salt in there. We could say that Jesus Christ must be at the source; or more accurately, He must be the source of our lives.
- Thinking back to **2 Peter**, Peter is saying go back to the source Jesus Christ, and add to that faith in Christ, virtue, knowledge, self control...etc. If these things are in you and are increasing, you will no longer have a barren and unfruitful life. Notice the key phrase at the end of **verse 8**; **“in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”**



- Our daily walk with Christ; our daily faith in Christ, our abiding in Christ, our occupation with Christ, must become a dynamic part of our lives which will result in spiritual maturity as well as good fruit. Abiding and resting in Christ does not depend on positive character qualities and good works. Rather, it produces those character qualities and good works. A person who claims to be abiding in Christ and occupied with Him while remaining unchanged does not understand the Christian life and what God has done for him or her. A moment by moment, day by day, walk of faith, which comes from a true knowledge of Jesus Christ, will produce a growth in these character qualities, which then will produce believers who make a difference in our world and persevere to the end.

D. Warning for those who lack these qualities

2 Peter 1:9 – “But he that lacketh these things is blind and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.”

- ***He that lacks these things...*** What things!? Faith, knowledge, self-control, etc. Notice he says he is blind. Thinking back to **Eph 4:17-19**, “*Walk not in the vanity of*



your mind, having your understanding darkened.” The thought that Paul is communicating in this Ephesian passage is that as we begin to walk in the vanity of our minds (pursuing worthless things) and as we are occupied with anything other than Jesus Christ, at some point, our understanding is darkened. Or as Peter says, “***we are blind and cannot see clearly.***” We forget that we were “*purged from our old sins,*” (**Rom. 6:6**).

- As we by faith rest in the truth that the old man has been crucified, the Holy Spirit holds the flesh in the place of death and we’re able to walk free from sin’s power, or as it says, “***we’re purged from our old sins.***” It’s interesting to give thought to Peter’s reference to being blind, or nearsighted. It could even be translated “shortsighted.” Peter may have meant that believers who are not growing in their faith could see only as far as the world around them. Their shortsightedness left them blind to the big picture, the whole idea of what Christ can do in and through a life. Thus, they remained tied to what the world has to offer.

E. The key to a confident, successful Christian experience

2 Peter 1:10 – “Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.”

- The word “wherefore” ties this verse to the preceding passage. Because Christ has empowered believers through the knowledge of Him; because He has given believers great and precious promises so that they can participate in His Divine Nature and escape the corruption that is in the world. Because believers are growing in their faith so that they do not become barren and unfruitful; therefore, we can be certain of His calling and choosing.
- On the one hand we could say that our calling and election is already sure and confirmed because of our position in Christ. However, as we consider the believer’s behavior, if we’re seeing that we’re growing in the knowledge and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, if we’re adding to our faith purity and knowledge, etc., this will confirm, **not** to God, but in our own minds, our calling and election.
- We will be able to see that our calling and election is indeed sure which will produce a security in Christ not only concerning eternal life, but also for our daily lives. Peter wanted to rouse the complacency of the believers who had listened to false teachers and believed that because salvation is not based on their good deeds they could live any way they wanted. Basically he is asking, what does our life say about our faith? (**Jam. 2:18**) At the end of **verse 10**: ***“If you do these things you will never fall or stumble.”*** The believers to whom Peter wrote were in danger of buying into the message of these false teachers who taught that grace was a license to sin. Peter was countering this teaching by explaining that a true Christian who was called and elected by God, and who was abiding in Christ, would be able to avoid the trappings of the flesh and the lure of the world (**Col. 1:22, 23**).



2 Peter 1:11 “For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.”

- Peter is referring here to those believers who by grace through faith live a fruitful and triumphant life with God. For these, there will be an abundant entrance into heaven, a rich welcome into glory. This pictures the type of welcome that Stephen experienced as he was martyred in **Acts 7:56**. *“I see heaven opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.”*
- I remember hearing of a man who made the following comment; *“When I die, I want to slide into heaven on my stomach, stretching out my hand for the threshold of heaven, burned out for Jesus.”* His idea of an abundant entrance into heaven;

thinking that God would look down on him and say, *“Well done my good and faithful servant.”* That is not the picture that God gives.



A most often quoted scripture is **1 Cor 3:12-15**, *“Now if any man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, every man’s work shall be made manifest for the day shall declare it, as it shall be revealed by fire and the fire shall test man’s works of what sort it is. If any man’s work abides which he hath built there upon he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work shall be burned he shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire.”* The idea here is that God will put the fire to our works, which we thought were so good, and anything that was done in the power of man for self-motives (wood,

hay, and stubble) will be burned up. But those works that were done in the power of Christ will remain and are reward-able. Thus, an abundant entrance into heaven. *“But if any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss (of rewards) but he himself shall be saved, so as by fire.”*

- A picture of those who have been called and chosen but have been unfruitful and stumbled along the way; they will reach heaven and receive their salvation, but it will be as Paul says only *“as by fire.”* Whether this welcome will be any different is unclear, but Peter encourages his readers to confirm their calling and election and to ensure a rich welcome by growing in their faith and adding to their faith as they grow. Here is something to think about, unless God’s promise of eternal life with Him is true, unless the whole idea of a rich welcome and an abundant entrance into heaven is true, morality makes no sense at all. We might as well get what pleasure we can each day until death does us in. The Bible points to the culmination of this life when all believers will live with God forever. Today may be rather tedious, hum-drum, discouraging or hurtful, but God promises a bright tomorrow when we enter into His presence and Jesus welcomes us at the finish line.

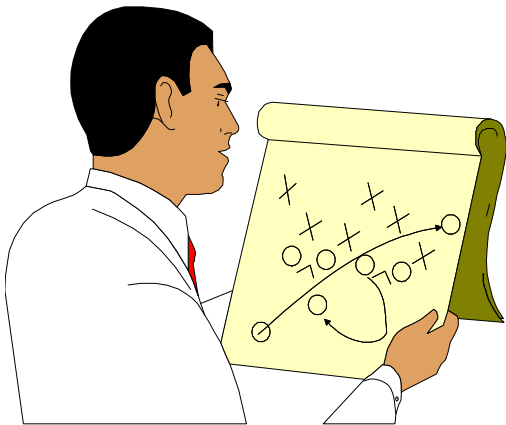
F. Peter restates importance of knowing and adhering to the Truth

2 Peter 1:12 – “Wherefore, I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and are established in the present truth.”

- The New Revised Standard Version begins this verse in this way; ***“Therefore I intend to keep on reminding you of these things...”*** What things!? The truth

that He has communicated up to this point; that grace and peace will be multiplied to us through the knowledge of God and of Christ. That His divine power has given unto us everything pertaining to life and godliness, and we take possession of it as we apply faith to the knowledge of all that He has done for us. That He has given unto us great and exceeding promises, and we become partakers of His Divine Nature. As well as a reminder to add to our faith purity, knowledge, self control, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love, and if these are increasing in our lives we will neither be barren or unfruitful; add to all this that we can look forward to an abundant entrance into heaven.

- It is fitting that Peter says, ***“Therefore I intend to keep on reminding you of these things, even though you know them and that you are already established in this present truth.”***



- Good football coaches are constantly reminding their players of the basics of the sport because athletes need reminders of the fundamentals. Likewise, it is the same with believers. We are in constant need of the reminders of the fundamentals of the faith, even though we know them and are established in these truths. However, **Eph 4:17-19** is also a reminder that, *as we walk in the vanity of our minds, our understanding is darkened and the result is that we drift from these truths.*

2 Peter 1:13, 14 – “Yea, I think it fitting, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance, Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shown me.”

The NIV says it this way, ***“I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in this tent of this body because I know that I will soon put it aside as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me.”***

- Peter intended to continue to remind the believers, to refresh their memories, to wake them up regarding the basic truths of their faith as long as he lived.



2 Peter 1:15 – “Moreover, I will endeavor that ye may be able, after my decease, to have these things always in remembrance.”

- Peter would do all possible to see that after his departure they would be able to remember these things. It's not real clear how Peter intended to do this, but it is clear that he was concerned that these truths be not forgotten after the deaths of those who had been eyewitnesses to Jesus' ministry on the earth to which he makes reference in 16:

2 Peter 1:16 – “For we have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.”

- Peter could be referring to the cleverly devised myths of the false teachers, or to fables about God's incarnation, resurrection, Second Coming. (**1 Tim 1:4; 4:7; Titus 1:14; 2 Peter 3:4; 2 Tim. 2:17, 18**). Peter's comment, “*...but we have been eyewitnesses of his majesty*” is probably a reference to the fact that Peter, James and John were eyewitnesses to the transfiguration. (**Mark 9:2-8**) Keep in mind that the disciples had also witnessed some unusual demonstrations of power when He stood up in their boat and took command of the wind and waves and when He walked on water. He also gave them a tremendous glimpse of glory when He healed the sick, cast out demons, and fed the 4,000 and 5,000 people.

2 Peter 1:17 – “For he received from God, the Father, honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

- The transfiguration was a brief glimpse of Jesus' true glory from God the Father. This was God's affirmation of everything that Jesus had done and was about to do. The transfiguration actually assured the disciples that their faith in Christ was well placed and their eternity was secure. Jesus Christ was truly the Messiah, the Son of God. On earth, Jesus appeared as a man, a poor carpenter from Nazareth, but at the transfiguration, His true identity was revealed with the glorious radiance that He had before coming to earth. (**John 1:5; Phil. 2:6**)

2 Peter 1:18 – “And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.”

- Not only had Peter, James and John seen Christ's glory, but they had also heard it as well from God Himself. (**Matt. 17:1,5**)

2 Peter 1:19 – “We have also a more sure word of prophecy, unto which ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts;”



NIV ***“And we have the word of the prophets made more certain and you will do well to pay attention to it as a light shining in a dark place until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.”***

- Peter had reflected on what he and the other apostles had seen, heard and experienced. Now, he was reminded of another assurance; he added the prophets to the mixture of evidence showing the error of the false teachers. What God had said on the mountain made the word of the prophets of the Old Testament even more certain. The transfiguration actually verified and validated all that the prophets had foreseen. God would come to earth as a human and save people from their sins. If the people were struggling with Peter's eyewitness account, they could go back to the Old Testament scriptures and there find the same truth. **(Matt. 5:17)** Peter is advising believers that they should pay attention to the scriptures as one would pay attention to a light shining in a dark place. He encouraged the believers to continue in this manner until the day dawns and the Morning Star rises in their hearts. The day that will dawn refers to the Second Coming of Christ. Christ is the Morning Star and when He returns He will shine in His full glory. **(2 Cor. 4:4-6)**

2 Peter 1:20-21 – “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretations. For the prophecy came not at any time by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”

- Christians must be able to rest on the infallibility of scripture or their faith is of no value. Thus Peter's words ***“first of all you must understand this”***. Perhaps the false teachers were denying scripture by denying its divine origin saying that the words were merely the writer's interpretation, not God's words. False prophets produced false prophecies from their own fleshly inspiration; however, genuine prophets did not interpret the message as God gave it to them, they simply spoke what was spoken to them and recorded the God originated and Spirit-motivated words. The same God who spoke to the disciples at the transfiguration had spoken to the prophets, guiding them in their writings.
- God inspired the writers, so their message is authentic and reliable. **2 Tim. 3:16 – “Scripture is given by inspiration of God.”** God spoke to men called prophets the exact message He wanted written. Sometimes He spoke audibly, sometimes in visions, sometimes He put the message directly into their minds. The Bible is the only book in the world whose author is God. It was written over the course of 1600 years by more than 40 men, and yet it still has absolute unity from beginning to end because God is the author.

Chapter 2

A. Introduction

- This chapter includes severe warnings against the false teachers who had infiltrated the church and threatened to turn young believers away from the truth. It contains parallels to **Jude 4-16**.

B. Beware of false teachers

2 Peter 2:1 – “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who secretly shall bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.”

- The end of chapter 1 leads into the topic of chapter 2. Peter explained that God had worked through humans to give His words to people. At the same time, however, evil was at work. The true prophets spoke and wrote God’s Word, but there were also false prophets among the people.
- Back in Old Testament times we see false prophets contradicting the true prophets. Some examples are found in **Deut. 13:1-5, I Kings 18:19, Jer. 23:16-40** and **Jer. 28:1-17**. These Old Testament false prophets oftentimes were telling people only what they wanted to hear. They did not speak God’s words and they brought messages to make the people and the kings feel comfortable with their sin.



- So Peter in verse 1 said, ***“there shall be false teachers among you.”*** The words ***“among you”*** indicate that the false teachers come out from among the believers and the church. Some interesting scriptures regarding Jesus warnings about false teachers are **Matt: 7:15, Matt 24:11** and **Mark 13:22, 23**. It wasn’t long after these words were spoken by Jesus that false teachers infiltrated the churches just as the gospel message was spreading.

- Like Peter, the apostle Paul was aware of the dangers of false teachers and spoke out against them (**Acts 20:29, 30; 2 Cor 11:13-15; Gal.1:6, 7; 1 Tim. 4:1, 2**). John also warned against false teachers in **2 John 7**.
- Looking again at the end of **2 Peter 2:1**, the false teachers would secretly bring in destructive heresies and Peter explained that these heresies would actually deny the Lord. The word “deny” means to contradict or reject. Thus these heresies could have taken the form of denying Christ’s Second Coming, or belittling the significance of Jesus’ life, death and resurrection, or some actually claimed that Jesus was not really God, denying His deity.
- Peter points out that the false teachers had no allegiance to Christ who had paid the price for them with his own life. Peter goes on to explain the seriousness of denying



shalt despise their image.”

Christ in saying that by turning away from Him it would bring swift destruction on oneself. Swift destruction doesn’t necessarily mean that something terrible would happen immediately because many false teachers seem to work and prosper for years, however as **Psalm 73** makes clear, when that certain destruction comes, it is swift and final. **Psalm 73:16-20** reads, *“When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me, until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end. Surely, thou didst set them in slippery places; thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! They are utterly consumed with terrors. As a dream when one awaketh; so, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou*

C. Tactics and motivation of a false teacher

2 Peter 2:2 – “And many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.”

- Despite the certainty of their destruction, the false teachers unfortunately will be successful in two areas. They will turn many from the truth who will follow their destructive ways (**Prov. 19:3**); and if that’s not enough, they also speak evil of the truth and discredit not only the gospel of Christ, but also the deeper grace truths. **1 Tim 6:1; Titus 2:5** All throughout scripture, we see this lived out (*“the way of truth is evil spoken of”*) – **Jer. 5:30-31; Acts 13:45**

2 Peter 2:3 – “And through covetousness shall they, with feigned words, make merchandise of you; whose judgment now for a long time lingereth not, and their destruction slumbereth not.”

- Peter certainly spared no words in his condemnation of the false teachers. He exposed their prime motivation, which is greed. Only money, not love for the people or truth mattered to them. Notice his comment that **“through covetousness shall they, with false words, make merchandise of you.”** The more people they get into their churches, means more money for bigger church buildings, and bigger salaries; therefore the people become merchandise. These false teachers were also distorting the truth and teaching what people wanted to hear. Such teaching brings financial gain because their message is popular, therefore people come to hear (**Jer. 6:13-14**).



- It's interesting also that greed can take other forms besides money. False teachers may be greedy for power or popularity it leads to preoccupations with numbers, converts or speaking engagements. Peter ends verse 3 with, **“whose judgment now for a long time lingereth not, and their destruction slumbereth not.”** The NIV: **“Their condemnation has long been hanging over them and their destruction has not been sleeping.”** The teachers may seem to be getting away with their exploitation, but all the while condemnation is hanging over them and destruction will definitely be their end.

D. False teachers identified with those whose punishment is certain

2 Peter 2:4 – “For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;”

- If some people still did not believe in the punishment of these false teachers, Peter went back to the Old Testament examples of God judging evil in the past. He pointed out that God did not spare the angels when they sinned, which could be a reference to the angels who rebelled along with Satan (**Ezek. 28:15**). Or it could refer to the angels described in **Jude 6; Rev 12:7- 9**. If God did not spare His angels, neither will He spare the false teachers; judgment will come. Notice that Peter says the angels that sinned were cast into hell. These sinful angels will be kept in hell, a place of punishment, until the judgment, their final doom (**Matt 25:40, 41**). False teachers will face the same judgement as the rebellious angels.

2 Peter 2:5 – “And spared not the old world, but saved Noah, the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;”

- Another example of God’s certain judgment against evil is when he brought the flood on the world’s ungodly people. Peter referred to the flood 3 times in his two letters (**1 Peter 3:20; 2 Peter 2:5; 2 Peter 3:6**).
- It’s interesting to give thought to Peter’s comment that God did not spare the ancient world, for the great sinfulness of all mankind led Him to destroy the entire rebellious civilization. Yet even as God was destroying all the sinful people in Noah’s day, He protected those who believed Him; eight people in all, Noah and 7 of his relatives (**Gen. 8:16**).
- Peter refers to Noah here as a preacher of righteousness. However in all his preaching, few believed. It’s interesting to give thought to the fact that Noah’s faith in God made him an outcast. He invested all that he had in God’s promise; he placed his entire family, fortune, everything he had inside that ark. But his witness was entirely rejected. He convinced no one outside of his immediate family. As a preacher, he would have been regarded as a total failure, but he *“found grace in the eyes of the Lord”* (**Gen 6:8**).

2 Peter 2:6 – “And, turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them with an overthrow, making them an example unto those that after should live ungodly;”

NIV: **“If he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by burning them into ashes and made them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly.”**

- Here is a third example of God’s punishment of evil in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. In **Gen. 18 & 19** it describes the sinfulness of those cities and Abraham’s efforts to keep them from being destroyed. When not even ten righteous people could be found, God destroyed the cities by burning them to ashes. He rained on Sodom and Gomorrah fire from heaven and actually some versions say that those cities were



condemned to extinction. The cities don't exist today. Peter explained that the horror of those cities, the ending of them, is an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly. Their ending will result in punishment and banishment from the presence of God. Peter's point: is if God did not spare angels, or the people who lived before the flood or the citizens of Sodom and Gomorrah, He would not spare the false teachers of his day.

2 Peter 2:7-8 – “And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy manner of life of the wicked For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds,”

- Just as Noah had been protected from the flood that destroyed the earth, so Lot (Abraham's nephew) had been rescued from Sodom & Gomorrah's destruction. The people of Sodom were wicked and great sinners against the Lord; we see that in **Genesis 13:12, 13**. When God destroyed the cities of Sodom & Gomorrah, He rescued Lot who apparently was a man of some importance, for when the angels went to take Lot from the city they found him sitting in the gateway where the city officials met. The wicked manner of life or the licentiousness of the people of Sodom refers to an “open and excessive indulgence in sexual sins,” and we see that in **Genesis 19:1-9**. However, Peter described Lot as a righteous man who was horrified by the evil in the city. The Genesis account does not make Lot appear to have been very righteous at all, in fact it portrays Lot as having little backbone, little concern about immorality, drunk and so deeply involved in the city that the angels had to literally drag him away from it.
- Peter's description of Lot as righteous probably is best seen in **Genesis 18** by Abraham's prayer. When God chose to bring swift and complete judgment on the evil of Sodom & Gomorrah, He also graciously saved His chosen ones. Believers today tormented by the sin they see around them, can take heart in the knowledge that one day God will make everything right. The wicked will be punished and the righteous, God's chosen ones, will be rescued just as God rescued Lot from Sodom & Gomorrah. He is able, to rescue believers from the temptations and trials we face in a wicked world. Lot was not sinless, but he put his trust in God and was spared when Sodom was destroyed.

2 Peter 2:9 – “The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished;”

- The point that Peter is now making is that if the Lord has done all this in the past, then He obviously knows how to rescue the godly from temptations and trials, today as well as in the future. Peter comforted his readers with God's changeless nature.

God has rescued the righteous and punished the wicked in ages past and He continues to do so today.

E. Tactics and motivation of a false teacher (continued)

2 Peter 2:10 – “But chiefly (especially) them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they; self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.”

The NIV translation of this verse: **“This is especially true of those who follow the corrupt desire of the sinful nature and despise authority.”**

- The certainty of the punishment described in the previous verses is for all evil people, but is especially true of the false teachers. These false teachers were following the corrupt desire of the sinful nature, of the flesh. This wording refers to all kinds of immorality and perverted sexual practices. Apparently the false teachers taught that Christian freedom placed believers above moral rules. They were actually promoting sexual indulgence. In addition, Peter makes mention here that they despise authority. This authority could refer to church leaders or to the denial of the sovereignty of God. Most likely the authority despised by the false teachers referred to anybody, including God, who may have any rule over them at all. The false teachers lived as they pleased and Peter wanted to make it clear that they would not get away with it.
- The last part of the verse; **“Presumptuous are they; self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities,”** further describes the false teachers as arrogant and self-willed. Only such an attitude could account for their defiance of authority as described here. The phrase, **“they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities”** possibly refers to spirit beings. The false teachers apparently were slandering spirit beings that they didn’t understand, perhaps by doubting the existence of supernatural powers.

2 Peter 2:11 – “Whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord.”

- Peter’s point is that not even the good angels in heaven, though **greater** in might and power than the evil angels, would consider bringing against them slanderous accusations before God. Although the false teachers slandered the evil angels, the angels of heaven never slandered them when they pronounced God’s judgment on the evil angels, but they said, **“The Lord rebuke you.” (Jude 9)** Perhaps the false teachers’ biggest problem was having egos so overgrown and inflated that they had no respect for authority, good or evil, lawful or unlawful.

2 Peter 2:12 – “But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not, and shall utterly perish in their own corruption.”

The NIV reads: **“But these men blaspheme in matters they do not understand. They’re like brute beasts, creatures of instinct, born only to be caught and destroyed and like beasts, they too will perish.”**

- Of course **“these men”** refers back to the false teachers who were blaspheming in matters they obviously didn’t understand. Peter further describes these false teachers as brute beasts or creatures of instinct who are no better than animals. They lived and spoke from mere instinct that is from the flesh, the sin nature. Like brute beasts the false teachers would be caught and destroyed. The false teachers of Peter’s day had set aside self-restraint in order to follow their passions, leading to self-destruction and eternal punishment.

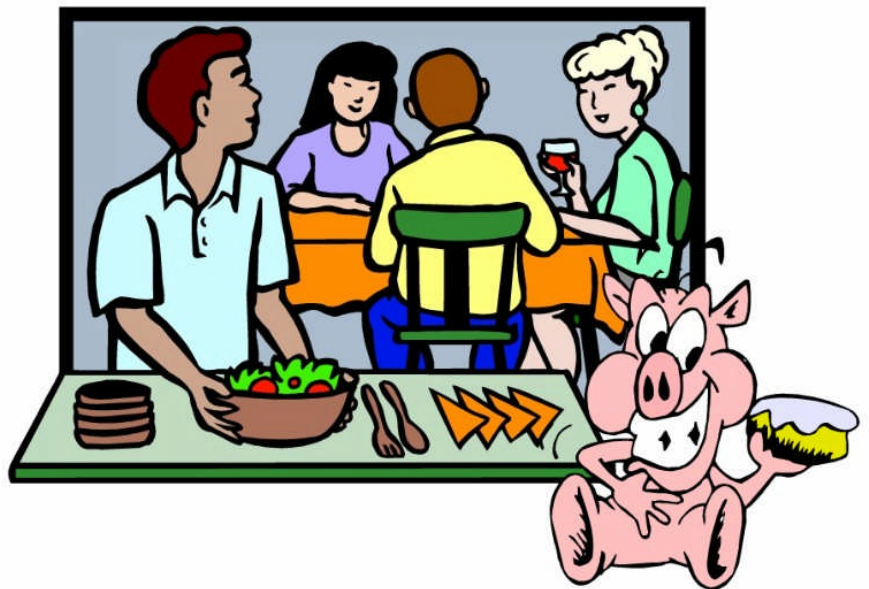
2 Peter 2:13 – “And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to revel in the daytime. Spots they are and blemishes, reveling with their own deceivings while they feast with you;”

- Peter explained that the false teachers would receive harm for the harm they have done in turning people aside from the truth to their lies. While the false teachers tried to pass themselves off as superior teachers with great knowledge, they caroused in the daylight, in drunkenness and sexual immorality. Such acts were normally done under the cover of darkness, but these men were so arrogant and self-willed that they did not even attempt to cover up their behavior. They took pleasure in doing it in broad daylight.

- Let’s read the last part of the verse in the NIV: **“They are blots and blemishes reveling in their pleasures while they feast with you.”**

The false teachers were like blots and blemishes; like stains or rotten spots; they ruined the Christian’s gatherings by their very presence. The feast may even refer to the Lord’s supper. Keep in mind Paul’s

comment in **1 Cor. 11** as he is speaking of the Lord’s supper: *“Therefore whosoever*



eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord.” (1 Cor. 11:27) Eating the bread and drinking the cup in an unworthy manner means that they have come to the Lord’s table for the wrong reasons; not to remember Him, not to honor Him in any way, but they came for their own self motives of gorging themselves or to get drunk.

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

- Peter had no easy words for these false teachers, no excuses for their behavior. Their sinful words and actions came from deep within. Their thoughts and motives were evil. **“Having eyes full of adultery”**, refers to looking on women with lust. Peter said that they could not cease from sin. Like brute beasts that followed their instincts, they were in bondage to the flesh.
- **“Beguiling or enticing unstable souls”** like a fisherman baiting the fish, the false teachers waited out their catch; they didn’t waste time with the strong believers, but sought out those who were not firmly grounded in truth and were weak in their faith.
- Finally Peter says, **“and hearts they have trained with covetous practices...”** or they have hearts trained in greed. These false teachers who were duping Christians, luring them away from the faith, were filled with pride, immorality, sensuality, greed, lust, slander and self will. No wonder Peter called them “accursed children.”

2 Peter 2:15 – “Who have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam, the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness,”

- Peter once again looks to the Old Testament for an illustration to apply to these false teachers. In their greedy, sinfulness they had left the straight road to God and gone astray. They followed in the steps of Balaam, who we see in **Numbers 22-24**. Balaam was hired by a pagan king to curse Israel. He hired himself out to a pagan as a prophet. He did what God told him to do for a period of time, but eventually his evil motives and desire for money won out (**Numbers 25:1-3 & 31:16**). Like the false teachers of Peter’s day, Balaam loved the wages of doing wrong. The false teachers were not interested in serving God, instead they were using God/religion for financial gain and personal advancement.

2 Peter 2:16 – “But was rebuked for his iniquity; the dumb ass speaking with man’s voice forbade (restrained) the madness of the prophet.”

NIV: **“But he was rebuked for his wrong doing by a donkey; a beast without speech who spoke with a man’s voice and restrained the prophet’s madness.”**

- Balaam had been hired by King Balak of Moab to put a curse on the people of Israel. He feared their numbers and the power of their God. Balaam liked the offer of a reward for placing a curse on the people. He claimed to do only what God told him, but the money was a strong temptation. Balaam probably thought he could figure out a way to obey God and still get the money. On his way to see King Balak, three times Balaam's donkey saw the angel of the Lord standing in their path ready to kill Balaam. Each time the donkey stopped and refused to go forward, Balaam beat the donkey.
- Finally the donkey spoke and an angel rebuked Balaam for his wrong attitude and wrong motives. Balaam realized that the donkey had saved his life, restraining his madness; for it was sheer madness to think that he could go against God. Finally Balaam obeyed God and refused to curse the Israelites. Like Balaam, the false teachers' attitudes were akin to madness. Balaam at least listened to the donkey. The false teachers listened to no one thinking they could oppose God and get away with it. They were steeped in sin, took great pleasure in it and lured others to join them.



2 Peter 2:17 – “These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest, to whom the mist of darkness is reserved forever.”

- The false teachers' messages ended in disappointment. Like a spring that gave no water, their messages could not deliver what they promised (**Proverbs 13:12**). Like clouds that brought no rain, their messages were without substance and could be blown away by the slightest wind of truth. What seems unbelievable is that the false teachers could make people believe their empty promises and enticements. (**Jude 12, 13**) These false teachers taught lies; their fate had already been sealed because for them, the deepest darkness has been reserved. The word “darkness” refers to the final fate of all wicked people. The false teachers would be forever cast from God's light into the deepest darkness of hell.

2 Peter 2:18 – “For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that are just escaping from them who live in error.”

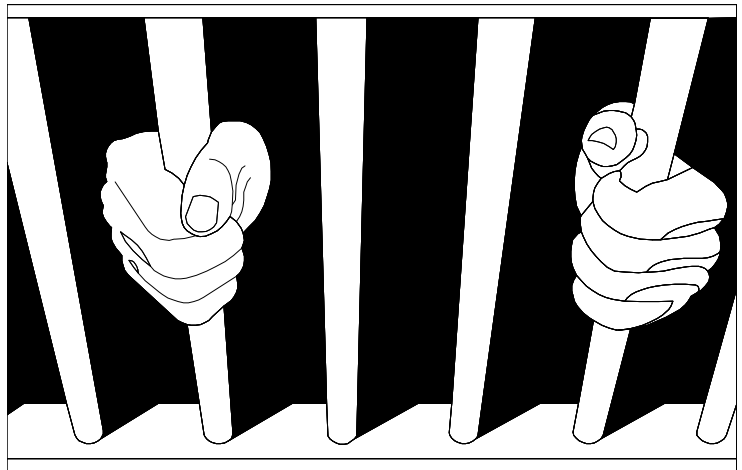
NIV: **“For they mouth empty, boastful words and by appealing to the lustful desires of sinful, human nature, they entice people who are just escaping from those who live in error.”**

- The false teachers drew attention to themselves by their boastful words. They spoke open and loudly but their words were ultimately empty. They had no substance, no truth. Instead, they enticed people by offering new believers the lifestyles that they themselves followed living in complete disregard of moral laws. By appealing to the lustful desires of the flesh, the false teachers were able to draw many new Christians away from the truth. Who would believe the message of these false teachers? Not the strong followers of Christ. The false teachers focused on those who were **“just escaping from those who live in error.”** That is, those new converts still unsteady in the faith, not yet firmly rooted in Christ, not yet free of pagan associations and habits. Those who live in error refer to the pagans. To these young believers, the empty, boastful words sounded very convincing.

2 Peter 2:19 – “While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption; for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.”

- The freedom the false teachers promised was freedom to live as one pleased.

However, such a promise of freedom was empty, for the false teachers were not free. Instead, they themselves were slaves of corruption. They had tossed truth aside in the name of freedom only to find themselves enslaved once again. Why? Because people are slaves to whatever masters them (**Rom. 6:6**). Many believe that freedom means doing anything they want. But no one is ever completely free in that sense. *The freedom Christ brings is freedom from sin, not freedom to sin.* Let's focus again on the last part of verse 19: **“For people are slaves to whatever masters them.”**



- Too often freedom from authority leads to preoccupation with new pleasures that freedom brings. But these actions can quickly enslave a person. It's interesting to

think back that Jesus had talked about true freedom to the false teachers of his day. To the Jews who had believed him, he said, *“If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.”* They (the religious leaders) answered him, *“We are Abraham’s descendents and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?”* Jesus replied, *“I tell you the truth. Everyone who sins is a slave to sin. A slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. So if the son sets you free, you’ll be free indeed.”* (John 8:31-36; Rom. 6:16; I Cor 6:12).

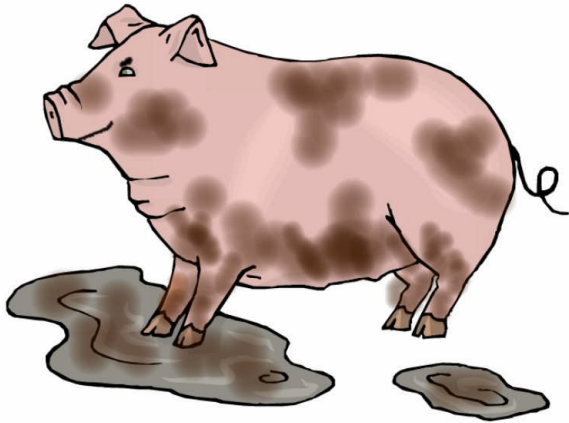
2 Peter 2:20, 21 – “For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in it, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.”

- The ***“they”*** that Peter is speaking of seems very probable that once again he is referring to the false teachers. They had identified themselves as believers and had turned away from the corruption of the world. However, in time they turned aside from the faith becoming once again entangled in and overcome by the society in which they lived; an immoral and corrupt society alienated from God. Peter wrote that these false teachers are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning because they rejected the only way out of sin, the only way of salvation; like a person sinking in quicksand who refuses to grab the rope thrown to him or her. The one who turns away from Christ casts aside his or her only means of escape. Peter goes one step further by saying, ***“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.”*** Most likely, these teachers had been part of Christianity, but had not been truly born again (2 Cor. 13:5). The Apostle John wrote, *“They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us. Their going out showed that none of them belonged to us.”* (I John 2:19) So Peter wrote these words that they would have been better off never having known God’s truth than deliberately blaspheming His grace, love and forgiveness by rejecting Him (Heb. 6:4-6; Heb 10:26).



2 Peter 2:22 – “But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, the dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire.”

- Those who knew the truth and turned away from it were among the lowest of the low. To Jews no creatures were lower than dogs and pigs. The point that Peter is bringing is that those who return to evil are no better than dogs that return to their vomit, or sows that go back to wallowing in mud.
(Proverbs 26:11 – Dogs, pigs and foolish people). Those who make an outward profession of religion without a spirit controlled inner transformation will soon return to their old ways of life. Dogs and pigs do what they do naturally, and people also return to their natural inclination toward sin.



CHAPTER 3

A. Introduction

- The previous chapter focused on denouncing the false teachers. This chapter returns to the faithful believers offering them love and encouragement.

B. The Lord's return is inevitable despite the claims of scoffers

2 Peter 3:1 - “This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you, in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance,”

- Peter's purpose was to remind the believers that their lives ought to be characterized by sober mindedness and sincere understanding. It's interesting that Plato used the following phrase to refer to pure reason, “uncontaminated by the senses”; which would probably translate for us “pure reasoning, uncontaminated by the flesh” (**Phil. 4:8, 9**). Let's give some thought to this phrase “pure reasoning, uncontaminated by the flesh.” Our only hope for this type of sober-mindedness would be through faith in our co-crucifixion with Christ, where the flesh is held in check and the Spirit is influencing and controlling our minds (**Romans 6:6**). Sober-mindedness is the absence of any deceptive influence or control, including the flesh, and replaced by the truthful influence and control of the Spirit.

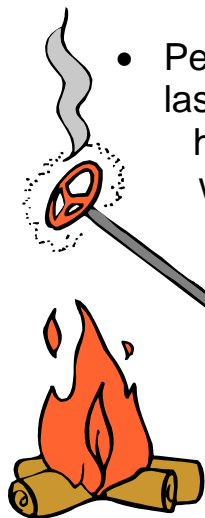
2 Peter 3:2 – “ That you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour:

NAS: “That you should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets, and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles.” (NAS)

- Paul had written in **Eph. 2:19, 20** that all believers are “*members of the household of God built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone.*” Peter writes that the church was to remember what the holy prophets had spoken in the past and recorded in scripture. They were also to recall the commandment of the Lord which could refer back to John 13:34 when Jesus said, “*A new commandment I give unto you that you love one another as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this shall men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another.*” Keep in mind that the Holy Spirit unified the prophets and apostles in an unchanging message of hope and truth.

The prophets had written of the Messiah who would come and the apostles had spoken and written that Jesus, the Messiah had come.

2 Peter 3:3 – “Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,”



- Peter wrote above all, we must understand what is to be expected in the last days, which began with Christ's resurrection, and will continue until his return. Jesus and the apostles warned that during the time period we live in, scoffers will come. (**1 Tim. 4:1, 2: 2 Tim. 3:1-9**) Peter warned that the false teachers will ridicule the scriptures and will live to please themselves and their sinful desires. Remembering what we studied in chapter 2, these false teachers love money and attention. Through distorting the truth they effectively divide believers and cause many to go astray. Paul called them *“hypocritical liars whose consciences have been seared with a hot iron”* (**1 Tim 4:2**).

2 Peter 3:4 – “And these things write we unto you that your joy may be full.”

- The false teachers' scoffing focused on the promise of Christ's Second Coming. Jesus had promised that he would come again (**Mark 13:24-27**), but many years had passed and nothing had happened. Concern about the delay of Christ's Second Coming had caused Paul to write words of encouragement to other believers. Some believers in Corinth questioned the truth of the resurrection (**1 Cor. 15:12-58**). Some in Thessalonica were concerned that their loved ones who had died, would miss the Second Coming (**1 Thess. 4:13-5:11**). Others in that city had stopped working in order to wait for Christ's return and had become a burden to the church (**2 Thess. 3:6-15**). James also wrote to the believers, encouraging them to have patience as they awaited the Lord's return (**James 5:7-11**). Of course the scoffers based their argument on the fact that nothing has really changed, so why think that it ever will?

2 Peter 3:5,6 – “For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water, By which the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished.”

- What these scoffers were forgetting in their argument that all things had remained unchanged, was that God had created the world; creation disproves their comment that all things continue unchanged because the creation of the earth was a change

on the formless void that we see in **Gen. 1:1,2**. The very reason the world was continuing in a stable, predictable pattern was because, God in his grace, had created it that way. By the word of God the heavens were created (**Gen. 1:6-8**), by the word of God an earth was formed out of water (**Gen 1:9, 10**). The point that Peter is making here in **chapter 3** is that as the creation was an act of God, so was the flood.

- The word “world” refers to God’s judgment and destruction of the inhabitants of the world, not the world itself. Peter had alluded to this in **2 Peter 2:5** where he had stated that God did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people, but protected Noah. The real issue with the false teachers is the same that’s been going on ever since the Garden of Eden. The issue is to occupy us with anything other than Jesus Christ. If God can be discredited, if Jesus Christ can be set aside, then man is free to be his own God, to be in control of his own life.

2 Peter 3:7 – “But the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.”

- By God’s word the heavens and the earth were created. We saw that in **verse 5**. By his word the earth’s inhabitants were destroyed in judgment. We saw that in **verse 6**. By the same word, God will bring future judgment and destruction. God had intervened before He will intervene again. But instead of destruction by water, Peter wrote that the heavens and the earth have been reserved for fire. In Noah’s day the earth was judged by water, but the Second Coming it will be judged by fire.

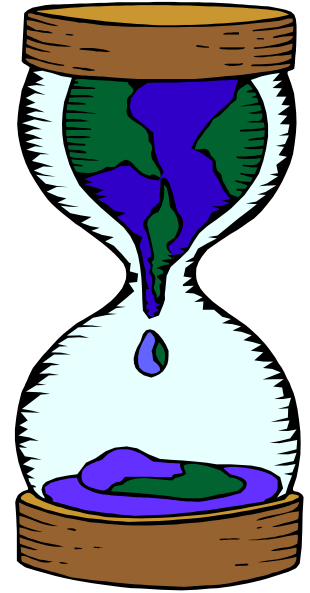


This fire is described in **Rev. 19:20; 20:10-15. Is. 66:15-16; Mal. 4:1; Ps. 97:3; Daniel 7:9, 10: Matt. 3:11,12**. Judgment has already been destined. The Day of Judgment and destruction of the godless ones will come, it’s only a matter of God’s timing. The word “reserved” means “stored up or laid away.” “Being kept” means “being guarded or held.” It’s interesting that **2 Peter** is the only New Testament epistle that mentions the world will actually be destroyed by fire.

C. The Lord's delay is due to His mercy and patience

2 Peter 3:8 – “But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.”

- Peter had made his point that Christ would certainly return and bring judgment, but the question still remained. Why was the Lord delaying so long? Peter offers two reasons in verses **8 & 9**. First, the Lord does not count time as people do. He is above and outside the sphere of time. God sees all of eternity, past and future. Indeed, to Him one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day. Peter urged the believers to once again remember the scriptures. **Ps. 90:4** says, “*For a thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by or like a watch in the night.*” God may have been slow to these believers as they faced persecution every day and longed to be delivered, but God is not slow. He simply doesn't operate according to our timetable.



2 Peter 3:9 – “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

- The second reason for the Lord's delay concerning His promise of His return, was not slackness on His part. God was not tardy or late. The Lord is delaying His return because He is longsuffering and compassionate, and wants as many people as will, to come to faith in Him.
- It's interesting to give thought to God Himself. When has God ever failed to keep a promise? When has God ever fulfilled a promise in quite the exact way that we think He should? When we think about this whole issue of His slowness, what could God possibly be waiting for? Look around at needy souls, lost without a Savior, ignorant of God's promise. If we're walking in the Spirit, then we'll have the same compassion that God has for these folks and have a desire to see them come to Christ. Read the book of Jonah to see God's compassion for the lost. Love is the reason that he delays the destruction of the world. Of course we see that in **John 1:4, 7, 9; John 3:16**. Some scriptures that reveal God's patience that we could consider are **Ex. 34:6; Num. 14:18; Ps. 86:15; Jer. 15:15; Ez. 18:23; Rom. 2:4; Rom. 9:22; Rom. 11:32; I Tim. 2:4**.

D. The Day of the Lord described

2 Peter 3:10 – “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are in it, shall be burned up.”

- The “Day of the Lord” is referring to the day of Christ’s return and of God’s judgment on the earth. Peter repeated a warning used by Jesus that this day will come as a thief in the night (**Matt. 24:42-44; Rev. 3:3; Rev. 16:15**). Christ’s Second Coming will be swift, sudden, unexpected and terrible for those who do not believe in Him. But for those who have put their faith in Christ, it will be a time of great joy. **I Thess. 5:2; 4-5**. At the end of the verse Peter writes: “....***the heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.***” (NIV) Peter is quoting words that he had heard Jesus say describing the end. In **Matt. 24:29** Jesus had said immediately after the distress of these days, “***the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light and the stars will fall from the sky and heavenly bodies will be shaken***” (also see **Luke 21:21; Is. 13:10-13; Is. 24:19; Is. 34:4; Joel 3:15; Micah 1:4**)
- Peter is communicating that this earth will not last forever. As God intervened to judge the earth by water, so one day He will intervene again. But in that day the judgment will be by fire and everything will be destroyed. He describes three aspects of this:
 1. “***that the heavens will disappear with a roar***” this describes the end of the earth’s atmosphere in the sky above.
 2. “***the elements will be destroyed by fire***”, which could mean that the celestial bodies will also be destroyed (the sun, moon, stars and planets);
 3. “***the earth and everything in it will be laid bare***”; this can be translated “***the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed.***”
- This extremely difficult phrase has given rise to numerous possibilities but there seems to be an indication that the earth will disappear, being burned up, so that all the works that people counted on in this earth and in place of God will be revealed for their futility. When will these events occur? Some have placed them between the events of Revelation 20 (the thousand year reign of Christ, Satan’s doom, the final judgment), and Revelation 21 (the new heavens and the new earth and the descent of the new Jerusalem.) In **Rev 20:11**, John says, “***Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it, earth and sky fled from his presence and there was no place for them.***”

2 Peter 3:11, 12 – “Seeing, then, that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy living and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, in which the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?”

- Peter’s description of the coming destruction of the earth ought to cause all Christians to carefully examine our lives. His question, “*what kind of people ought you to be*” is rhetorical. They already knew the answer, but he told them anyway; you ought to live holy and righteous lives. Such lives would be in direct contrast to the unholy living and godlessness found in the world and taught by the false teachers. Peter had described this kind of living in **1 Peter 1:13-16, 22-25; 2:1-3, 11, 21; 3:1-12; 4:1-11.**
- The end of verse 12 (NIV): “***That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire and the elements will melt in the heat.***” In case anyone had missed it, Peter repeated his point about the final end to the world. However, Christians will be safe through it. We can look forward to it.

2 Peter 3:13 – “Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, in which dwelleth righteousness.”

- Believers looking forward to the end of the earth because it means the fulfillment of another of God’s promises: His creation of new heavens and a new earth. God’s purpose for people is not destruction, but re-creation, not annihilation, but renewal (**Is. 66:22; Jer. 29:11**). In **Revelation 21** there’s a beautiful description of the new heavens and earth. Believers are assured that righteousness is at home there because God Himself will live among the people.



2 Peter 3:14 – “Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.”

- Peter is saying here that God’s kingdom will be characterized by righteousness, therefore believers ought to live holy and righteous lives now in preparation for living in the kingdom. The idea is to live in eager expectation of his coming. In **2:13**, Peter described the false teachers as blots and blemishes, however the believers were to be spotless and blameless as Christ was the lamb without blemish and without spot. Keep in mind that our only hope for living this kind of life is through the cross; through our co-crucifixion with Christ. As **Galatians 2:20** states, “*I am*

*crucified with Christ,” and **Romans 6:6**, “Know this, that the old man has been crucified that the body of sin might be rendered powerless and hence forth we are no longer slaves to sin.”*

2 Peter 3:15 – “And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation, even as our beloved brother, Paul, also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you;”

NIV: **“Bear in mind that our Lord’s patience means salvation...”**

- Remember the false teachers were attributing the delay to slackness on God’s part, however the believers were reminded to bear in mind that the delay in the Lord’s return was an indication of his patience.
- The end of this verse Peter mentions Paul and says, **“Just as our brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him...”** It’s interesting that in **Galatians 2:11-14** Paul describes a time when he publicly rebuked Peter for being inconsistent in his dealings with Jews and Gentiles. While that has left some to believe that there was friction between Peter and Paul, it appears that they had great respect for each other as they worked in the ministries to which God had called them. Peter and Paul had very different backgrounds and personalities and they preached from different viewpoints. Paul emphasized grace, while Peter wrote about Christian life and service. Peter spoke sincerely of Paul as he here refers to him as “our beloved brother Paul.” Peter obviously recognized the value of Paul’s letters in the growth of the church, for he described Paul as **“writing them with the wisdom that God had given him.”** In other words, these were inspired works.

E. Peter’s final warning and encouragement

2 Peter 3:16 – “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.”

- It’s interesting to consider that the teachings of the apostles were never distorted by the person to whom they were given whether the letter came from Paul or Peter, the message could be depended on, for it had come from God Himself. By this time the early church was considering Paul’s letters to be inspired by God, therefore Peter wrote of Paul’s letters as if they were on a level with the other scriptures. In the early days of the church, the letters from the apostles were read to the believers and often copied and passed along to other churches. The believers regarded these writings to be as authoritative as the Old Testament scriptures.

- The things that are hard to understand in Paul's letters, like our co-crucifixion with Christ may have put off some readers; Paul himself mentions in Corinthians that the preaching of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing. The grace message is often misunderstood and abused and the false teachers had intentionally misused Paul's writings by distorting and condoning lawlessness. No doubt this had made the teachers popular because people like to have their favorite sins justified.

2 Peter 3:17 – “Ye therefore, beloved, seeing that ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.”



- Again, Peter is warning his readers about the dangers of false teachers by explaining the false teachers' tactics and future destruction. His thought was that being forewarned, the believers would not be carried away with the error of the lawless. To be carried away means to be led astray into error. ***“Therefore beloved Christians,”*** appealed Peter, ***“Be forewarned so that you can stand firm in faith until the end.”***

2 Peter 3:18 – “But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever, Amen.”

- Peter concludes this brief letter as he had begun: by urging his readers to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It's interesting to consider that as we grow in knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ; as we learn more about Him; as we learn Jesus, not just about Him, but truly learn Jesus (**Eph 4:20**), then we will grow in grace. Grace is unmerited favor, a free gift from God and as we grow in our understanding of who Christ is and what He has done for us, we will grow in grace.
- Peter ends this epistle with, ***“To Him be glory both now and forever.”*** The thought here is: as we grow in grace He gets the glory, but as we grow in our effort to serve the Lord and any good thing does come of it, then we get the glory. And so Peter's case rests. The false teachers have been exposed and believers have been forewarned and encouraged.

