

The Second Epistle Of Peter



Sermon Outlines

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Precious Gifts From God

2 Peter 1:1-4

INTRODUCTION

1. **The Second Epistle of Peter** is a short but significant part of the New Testament...
 - a. It was written by Peter, who identifies himself as “a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ” - **2 Pe 1:1**
 - b. It was written to those who received his first epistle - cf. **2 Pe 3:1**; cf. **1 Pe 1:1**
 - c. It was written shortly before his death - **2 Pe 1:12-15**
2. The “**theme**” of the epistle can be stated as “**Beware, But Grow**” - **2 Pe 3:17-18**
 - a. “Beware” lest you fall, being led away with error - **17**
 - b. “But Grow” in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior - **18**
 - Virtually every verse of this epistle falls into one of these two areas
3. In this lesson, the first in a series of expository outlines based upon **2nd Peter**, we shall consider Peter’s salutation - **2 Pe 1:1-4** (read)
4. In his greeting, Peter refers to several blessings or “gifts” that we have received from God and Jesus Christ
5. In describing them, I am going to use a word that was a favorite of Peter: “**precious**”
 - a. It is found twice in this passage: “precious faith” (**1:1**) and “precious promises” (**1:4**)
 - b. Peter used it six times in his earlier epistle as well - **1 Pe 1:7,19; 2:4,6,7; 3:4**
 - c. The Greek word is **timios** {**tim’-ee-os**}, and it means:
 - 1) As of great price, precious
 - 2) Held in honor, esteemed, especially dear

[This word is most befitting the four “gifts” referred to in our text, the first of which Peter actually uses “precious” to describe...]

I. A LIKE PRECIOUS FAITH (1)

A. A FAITH THAT IS “LIKE”...

1. Like what? Like the faith that Peter himself has!
2. While the **objective** sense of faith (i.e., the gospel - cf. **Ju 3**) may be in view here, I suspect that Peter has in reference the **subjective** sense of faith (the faith one has in the gospel)

B. NOTICE THAT THIS GIFT IS “OBTAINED” (GIVEN, KJV)...

1. The word is **doreomai** {**do-reh’-om-ahee**}, and is in the middle voice, suggesting that “faith” is both given and received
2. That faith is **given** is evident from:
 - a. **Ro 10:17; Jn 20:30-31** - faith comes the Word of God; if God had not given His

Word, saving faith would not be possible!

- b. **1 Pe 1:20-21** - it is through Christ we believe in God; if God had not sent Christ, many of us would still be idol worshippers!
- c. **2 Pe 1:1** - it is “by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ” that we have faith; because of Jesus’ Divine sacrifice, saving faith is possible!
3. But faith **given** is not truly “obtained” unless it is also faith **received**
 - a. One must be willing to accept the Word with faith - cf. **He 4:2**
 - b. We must therefore be willing to receive the gift which God gives (in this case, the gift of faith made possible through His Word)

C. WHY IS THIS FAITH “PRECIOUS”...?

1. Most certainly because of the **object** of our faith: Jesus Christ, the Son of God!
2. But also because the faith **itself** (trust, conviction) is of great value to God; consider how God viewed Abraham’s faith - cf. **Ro 4:3; He 11:1-2**
3. And one might add, because of all the blessings enjoyed by those with such faith!

[This leads us to the next “gift” described by Peter...]

II. GRACE AND PEACE MULTIPLIED (2)

A. GRACE AND PEACE WERE COMMON FORMS OF GREETING...

1. **Grace** - the greeting which requests God’s unmerited favor upon the person addressed
2. **Peace** - the greeting requesting the natural result of God’s favor

B. THESE TWO BLESSINGS ARE “MULTIPLIED” IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD AND OF JESUS CHRIST...

1. All men experience God’s favor and its result to some degree - cf. **Mt 5:45**
2. But only in Christ can one enjoy the **fullness** of God’s favor and peace
 - a. Such as “every spiritual blessing” - **Ep 1:3**
 - b. Such as “the peace of God which surpasses all understanding” - **Ph 4:6-7**
3. Such fullness comes “in the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ”
 - a. This knowledge will be a recurring theme in this epistle - **2 Pe 1:3, 5-6, 8; 2:20; 3:18**
 - b. What this knowledge entails will be the focus of our next lesson
 - c. But notice for the time being that growing in grace must go hand-in-hand with growing in knowledge - cf. **2 Pe 3:18**

[To the “multiplicity” of grace and peace, and to obtaining of “like precious faith”, we can add a third “precious gift from God”...]

III. ALL THINGS THAT PERTAIN TO LIFE AND GODLINESS (3)

A. DEFINING LIFE AND GODLINESS...

1. **Life** in this context refers to our spiritual life and well-being
2. **Godliness** refers to the pious conduct which comes out of devotion to God
3. Thus, everything we need for spiritual life and serving God acceptably has been given to us!

B. “AS HIS DIVINE POWER HAS GIVEN TO US...”

1. It is by the power of God that we have new life! - cf. **Co 2:12-13; Ti 3:4-5**
2. It is by the power of God that we can live godly lives! - cf. **Ph 2:12-13; 4:13**

C. “THROUGH THE KNOWLEDGE OF HIM...”

1. Experiencing true life and godliness can only come through the knowledge of Him who has called us by glory and virtue - i.e., the knowledge of Jesus Christ
2. As will be seen in our next lesson, this knowledge is more than an academic, intellectual knowledge, it is a knowledge borne of developing and experiencing life in Jesus

[Finally, consider one more “precious gift from God”...]

IV. EXCEEDINGLY GREAT AND PRECIOUS PROMISES (4)

A. THEY ARE “EXCEEDINGLY GREAT AND PRECIOUS” BECAUSE...

1. Through them, we may be “partakers of the divine nature”
 - a. We may share in things related to the nature of God!
 - b. One of these has already been mentioned in our text: His divine power! - **2 Pe 1:3**
2. Through them, we have “escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust”
 - a. We cannot escape such “corruption” on our own
 - b. But through these “great and precious” promises, we have done so!

B. A SAMPLING OF THESE “PRECIOUS PROMISES”...

1. **Promises already received:**
 - a. The forgiveness of sins
 - 1) Promised by the prophets - **Ac 10:43**
 - 2) Received upon obedience to the gospel - **Ac 2:38; 22:16**
 - b. The gift of the Holy Spirit
 - 1) Promised by Jesus - **Jn 7:37-39**
 - 2) Received upon obedience to the gospel - **Ac 2:38; 5:32; Ep 1:13-14; Ga 4:6**
 - c. The assurance of God’s care and strength
 - 1) Promised by God Himself - **Isa 41:10**
 - 2) Enjoyed by those in Christ - **1 Co 10:13; He 13:5-6**
2. **Promises yet to be received:**
 - a. The redemption of our body, at the Resurrection - **Ro 8:23; 1 Co 15:50-53**
 - b. The inheritance that is reserved in heaven - **1 Pe 1:3-4**
 - c. The new heavens and new earth - **2 Pe 3:13**

CONCLUSION

1. All these promises are “exceedingly great and precious,” yet Peter seems to have in mind those promises **already received..**
 - a. Such as the forgiveness of sins, and the gift of the Holy Spirit
 - b. For through such promises we have already...
 - 1) Become “partakers of the divine nature” - e.g., **Ro 5:1-2**
 - 2) “Escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” - e.g., **Ro 8:1-2**

2. But having received these promises does not ensure that we will receive those that pertain to the future...
 - a. There is the real danger of apostasy - cf. **2 Pe 2:20-22**
 - b. Thus the need for the warning at the close of this epistle - cf. **2 Pe 3:17**

3. To remain faithful to the Lord, then, let us never forget these **“Precious Gifts From God”**...
 - a. A precious faith like Peter’s
 - b. Grace and peace multiplied
 - c. All things that pertain to life and godliness
 - d. Exceedingly great and precious promises

Have you received those precious promises proclaimed on the Day of Pentecost? - cf. **Ac 2:36-39**

Growing In The Knowledge Of Jesus Christ

2 Peter 1:5-11

INTRODUCTION

1. In our previous lesson (“**Precious Gifts From God**”), we noticed that a certain “knowledge” is the source of wonderful blessings...
 - a. Grace and peace is multiplied “in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord” - **2 Pe 1:2**
 - b. All things that pertain to life and godliness are given “through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue” - **2 Pe 1:3**

2. Also noted was how Peter closes his epistle with this admonition:

“But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”
- **2 Pe 3:18**

3. This raises several questions...
 - a. What does it mean to “grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ”?
 - b. How can we be sure that we are growing in this “knowledge”?
 - c. Why is Peter so concerned that we grow in this “knowledge”?

[In **2 Pe 1:5-11**, we find the answers to these questions, and in this lesson we shall examine this passage closely (read). [First, consider...]

I. WHAT GROWING IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST INVOLVES

A. THE DEVELOPMENT OF EIGHT GRACES...

1. These “graces” are listed in **2 Pe 1:5-7**
2. Briefly defined...
 - a. **Faith** is “conviction, strong assurance”
 - b. **Virtue** is “moral excellence, goodness”
 - c. **Knowledge** is “correct insight”
 - d. **Self-control** is “self-discipline”
 - e. **Perseverance** is “bearing up under trials”
 - f. **Godliness** is “godly character out of devotion to God”
 - g. **Brotherly kindness** is “love toward brethren”
 - h. **Love** is “active goodwill toward those in need”
3. Notice carefully **2 Pe 1:8**
 - a. We must “abound” in these eight “graces”
 - b. Only then can it be said that we are “growing in the knowledge of Jesus Christ”
4. Therefore it is more than simply increasing our “intellectual” knowledge of Jesus Christ!
 - a. Though such knowledge has a place, it is just one of the graces necessary
 - b. Peter is talking about growing in a **full** and **personal** knowledge of Jesus Christ
 - 1) Which comes by developing the “Christ-like” attributes defined above
 - 2) The more we grow in these “graces”, the more we really “know” Jesus (for He is

- the perfect personification of these “graces”)
5. That it involves more than intellectual knowledge is also evident from the Greek word used for knowledge in **2 Pe 1:2-3, 8**
 - a. The word is **epignosis {ep-ig'-no-sis}**, meaning “to become thoroughly acquainted with, to know thoroughly, to know accurately, know well” (**Thayer**)
 - b. Such knowledge comes only as we **demonstrate** these “Christ-like graces” in our lives

B. IN CONJUNCTION WITH EACH OTHER...

1. Notice the word “add” (or “supply”) in **2 Pe 1:5**
 - a. Before each grace mentioned, the word is implied
 - b. The word in Greek is **epichoregeo {ep-ee-khor-ayg-eh'-o}**
 - 1) “Originally, to found and support a chorus, to lead a choir, to keep in tune”
 - 2) “Then, to supply or provide”
 - c. This word therefore suggests the idea of “each grace working in harmony with the others to produce an overall effect”
2. Notice also the preposition “to” (or “in”) in **2 Pe 1:5-7**
 - a. This suggests “each grace is to temper and make perfect the grace that goes before it”
 - b. To illustrate:
 - 1) “to knowledge (add) self-control” - the grace of self-control enables one to apply properly the knowledge one has
 - 2) “to self-control (add) perseverance” - self-control in turn needs the quality of perseverance to be consistent day after day
3. Thus each grace is necessary!
 - a. They must all be developed in conjunction with each other
 - b. We cannot be selective and just pick the ones we like and leave others behind

C. WITH DILIGENT EFFORT...

1. Notice the word “diligence” in **2 Pe 1:5,10**
2. It means “earnestness, zeal, sometimes with haste”
3. To grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ requires much effort
4. We do not “accidentally” or “naturally” develop these graces!
5. If we are not careful, we may be like the teacher in the following illustration:
*In his book **Folk Psalms of Faith**, Ray Stedman tells a story of a woman who had been a school teacher for 25 years. When she heard about a job that would mean a promotion, she applied for the position. However, someone who had been teaching for only one year was hired instead. She went to the principal and asked why. The principal responded, “I’m sorry, but you haven’t had 25 years of experience as you claim; you’ve had only one year’s experience 25 times.” During that whole time the teacher had not improved.*

[We may have been Christians for a number of years. But unless we continue to grow, we are simply repeating the first year over and over again! Is the effort worth it? In the context of this passage Peter gives **three reasons** why we should “give all diligence” to grow in this knowledge of Jesus Christ...]

II. WHY WE SHOULD BE GROWING IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST

A. FAILURE TO GROW RESULTS IN SPIRITUAL MYOPIA AND AMNESIA... (9)

1. Our religion is “shortsighted” if we are not growing in this knowledge of Jesus - **2 Pe 1:9a**
 - a. For what is the ultimate objective of being a Christian?
 - b. To become like Christ! - cf. **Ro 8:29; Co 3:9-11**
 - c. As we have seen, this is what it really means to grow in the knowledge of Christ
2. Failure to so grow is an indication that we forgot why we were redeemed by the blood of Christ in the first place! - **2 Pe 1:9b**
 - a. To have our sins forgiven, yes...
 - b. But then, that we might present ourselves to God and become what He wants us to be
- **like His Son!**

B. WE WILL NEVER STUMBLE... (10)

1. This does not mean we will never sin - **2 Pe 1:10**; cf. **1 Jn 1:8,10**
2. The word “stumble” in Greek means “to fall into misery, become wretched; cf. the loss of salvation” (**Thayer**)
3. We will never stumble so as to fall short of our ultimate salvation!
4. But this is true **only** if we are “giving all diligence” to grow in the knowledge of Christ and thereby “making our calling and election sure”

C. AN ENTRANCE INTO THE EVERLASTING KINGDOM WILL BE ABUNDANTLY SUPPLIED... (11)

1. This “everlasting kingdom” is likely the “heavenly kingdom” referred to by Paul in **2 Ti 4:18**
2. In other words, the ultimate destiny of the redeemed!
3. What is meant by the idea of an “abundant entrance”?
 - a. “You may be able to enter, not as having escaped from a shipwreck, or from fire, but as it were in triumph.” (**Bengel**)
 - b. By possessing the eight graces, we will be able to live victoriously in this life and to joyously anticipate what lies ahead - cf. **2 Ti 4:6-8**

CONCLUSION

1. These three reasons should sufficiently motivate us to be diligent in growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ
2. Give all diligence to make our calling and election sure, by making every effort to add these graces to our lives!
3. Or have we forgotten that we were purged from our old sins?
 - a. We have, if we are apathetic in our desire to grow in these “graces”!
 - b. If so, we need to repent and pray for forgiveness!

Are you growing in the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord?

Perspectives From An Aged Apostle

2 Peter 1:12-15

INTRODUCTION

1. When a person faces impending death, their mind usually turns to thinking about things most important to them
2. For example, when Jesus knew His death was imminent, His prayer in John 17 reveals that the unity of believers was a great concern to Him - **Jn 17:20-21**
3. From our text for this lesson, it is evident that the apostle Peter knew his time on earth was short - **2 Pe 1:12-15**
4. What sort of things were on the mind of Peter at this time? What did this apostle of our Lord consider to be of great importance?

[There are several things we can glean from this passage in answer to these questions, that I call “**Perspectives From An Aged Apostle**”. For example, consider...]

I. HIS PERSPECTIVE ON THE NEED TO BE REMINDED

A. PETER’S CONCERN...

1. He does not want to be negligent in reminding them - **2 Pe 1:12**
2. He thinks it proper to remind them - **2 Pe 1:13**
3. He is even taking steps to ensure that they are reminded after his death - **2 Pe 1:15**

B. FREQUENT REMINDING CAN “STIR UP”...

1. Peter’s concern is not a reflection on their present condition - **2 Pe 1:13**
 - a. It is not as though they don’t know what they should know
 - b. It is not as though they weren’t established in what they know
2. But there is always the need to “stir up”
 - a. The Greek word is **diegeiro** {dee-eg-i’-ro}, and means “**to wake fully, i.e. arouse (lit. or fig.):--arise, awake, raise, stir up**”
 - b. The tendency is for one to become slack in their service to God
 - c. Somehow we need to be constantly “aroused, awakened”
 - d. Being reminded of things that are important is one way to do this!

C. WAYS TO BE REMINDED (OR “STIRRED UP”)...

1. Through frequent assembling with other Christians - **He 10:24-25**
2. Through daily Bible reading -- this is how Peter continues to remind us after his death - cf. **2 Pe 1:15**

[Do we appreciate the importance of being reminded, especially of things pertaining to the Christian life?]

May the concerns of an aged apostle help us to appreciate this need! Peter also shares with us...]

II. HIS PERSPECTIVE OF THE BODY AND DEATH

A. THE BODY IS A “TENT”...

1. Peter views his body as a “tabernacle” (KJV) or “tent” (NKJV) - **2 Pe 1:13-14**
2. In other words, a temporary housing for his “inner man” which continues after death - cf. **Mt 10:28**
3. Does this not contradict the view of the “Jehovah’s Witnesses”, who claim that the body is the soul, and not a housing for the soul?
4. Paul’s concept of the body was the same as Peter’s - cf. **2 Co 5:1-8**

B. DEATH IS “PUTTING OFF THE TENT”, AND “AN EXODUS”...

1. Peter speaks of his impending death, which the Lord had showed him - **2 Pe 1:14** (a possible reference to **Jn 21:18-19**?)
2. He first describes his dying as **“I must put off my tent”**
 - a. Again, this reflects his view of the body
 - b. And the differentiation between the soul (“I”) and the body (“my tent”)
3. In further describing his death, he uses the Greek word **exodos {ex’-od-os}** - **2 Pe 1:15**
 - a. Which means **“an exit, i.e. (fig.) death:--decease, departing”**
 - b. It is the same word used to describe the Israel’s “exodus” from Egyptian bondage
 - c. Far from viewing death as an end, Peter sees it as an exit from one world to the next

[Our apprehension of dying can be lessened if we adopt this aged apostle’s view of the body and death. It can certainly help keep things in proper perspective! Finally, let’s try to glean from our text...]

III. HIS PERSPECTIVE AS TO WHAT IS REALLY IMPORTANT

A. TWICE, PETER REFERS TO “THESE THINGS”...

1. “I will not be negligent to remind you always of **these things**” - **2 Pe 1:12**
2. “I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of **these things**” - **2 Pe 1:15**
- What are “these things” that Peter is so concerned about?

B. GROWING IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST...

1. “These things” must refer to what Peter had described in previous verses
2. Which we saw in our previous lesson dealt with “Growing In The Knowledge Of Jesus Christ” - **2 Pe 1:5-11**
3. Does this not say something about the importance of our previous study?
 - a. Peter knew his time on earth was short, that death was imminent
 - b. In what time he had left, he wanted to remind them of that which was most important
 - c. Even his last words in this epistle come back to this theme - **2 Pe 3:18**
 - d. It is evident, then, that “growing in the knowledge of Jesus Christ” as defined by Peter in **verses 5-11** should be of utmost importance to the Christian!
 - 1) Other things certainly have their place (e.g., the identity, organization, work, and worship of the church)
 - 2) But if there is to be a priority for the growing Christian, let it be that which Peter

was most concerned about during his final days on earth!

CONCLUSION

1. I have often benefited greatly from the time spent visiting with aged saints, who knew that their time on earth was short...
 - a. They were often prone to speak of noble themes, such as the meaning of life and death, and what was really important in life
 - b. Their perspective on things was sharpened, both by their experience and by the realization that life is but a vapor
2. What a privilege it must have been for those Christians in the first century who were around Peter as his end drew near!
 - a. To be able to sit at his feet, and listen to his words of exhortation and warning
 - b. To receive counsel from one who knew our Lord intimately, and served Him long and faithfully
3. Fortunately for us, Peter was indeed “careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things” after his decease, and we have that reminder in his epistles!

Will we take advantage of the “**Perspectives Of An Aged Apostle**”, and allow his “reminders” to stir us up?

The Foundation For Our Precious Faith

2 Peter 1:16-21

INTRODUCTION

1. We saw in our first lesson that this Second Epistle of Peter was addressed to “those who have obtained like precious faith with us” - cf. **2 Pe 1:1**
2. We also pointed out that the “precious faith” is most likely the personal conviction or trust in Jesus Christ one must have in order to be pleasing to God
3. But upon what foundation does our “precious faith” in Christ rest?
 - a. Is it just “blind faith”, or perhaps credulity on our part?
 - b. While that may be the case for some, it is certainly not what the apostles expected or even desired
4. Beginning with the first sermon on the Day of Pentecost, and continued throughout their preaching and teaching, the apostles appealed to two lines of evidences upon which our faith is to rest...
 - a. The testimony of apostolic eyewitnesses - e.g., **Ac 2:32; 3:14-15; 5:30-32; 10:39-43; 13:30-31**
 - b. The testimony of Old Testament prophecy - e.g., **Ac 2:25-31; 3:22-24; Ac 10:43; 13:32-41; 17:2-3**
5. Even in this Second Epistle, we find Peter referring to these “two lines of evidence” as we consider the text for our study - **2 Pe 1:16-21**

[This passage should help to reinforce the validity of our faith in Jesus, as that which is based upon a solid foundation! For example, let’s consider more closely what Peter has to say about...]

I. THE TESTIMONY OF APOSTOLIC EYEWITNESSES (16-18)

A. THEIR TESTIMONY WAS NOT “CUNNINGLY DEvised FABLES”...

1. Or to put it as found in other translations:
 - a. “We were not following cleverly devised legends” (Weymouth)
 - b. “For they were no fictitious stories that we followed” (Goodspeed)
 - c. “It was not on tales artfully spun that we relied” (NEB)
2. But as we shall see, if what they claim did not happen, this is the only reasonable alternative!
 - a. Either they were telling the truth...
 - b. ...Or they were carefully and purposely fabricating lies!
3. Why is this the only alternative? Because...

B. THEIR TESTIMONY WAS THAT OF “EYEWITNESSES”...

1. They claimed to be “eyewitnesses” of what they made known concerning Jesus’ coming and power!

2. As “eyewitnesses” they could not have been deceived...
 - a. Their interaction with Jesus was too intimate
 - b. As Peter said to the household of Cornelius: *“who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead.”* - **Ac 10:41**
 - c. As John wrote in his first epistle: *“...which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life”* - **1 Jn 1:1**

C. A SAMPLE OF THEIR “EYEWITNESS TESTIMONY”...

1. Peter refers to the event that occurred at “The Mount of Transfiguration” - cf. **Mt 17:1-9; Mk 9:2-9; Lk 9:28-36**
2. An event which depicted the power, majesty, honor and glory Jesus had
3. Why this event as a sample of their testimony?
 - a. It certainly proclaims the majesty of Jesus
 - b. It certainly illustrates the nature of their testimony...
 - 1) They “saw” Jesus transfigured before them, and joined with Moses and Elijah
 - 2) They “heard” the voice which came from the “Excellent Glory” (God the Father)
4. The fact that this event, like many others in the life of Jesus, was seen by a plurality of witnesses (“we were with Him”) serves to strengthen the force of their testimony

D. WHAT THIS MEANS...

1. Peter and the rest of the apostles really leave us with only two possibilities
 - a. Either they are telling the truth about Jesus...
 - b. ...Or they did the very thing that Peter denied in this passage (“follow cunningly devised fables”)!
2. Which is more reasonable, to believe the apostles told the truth, or were blatant liars, frauds, and deceivers?
 - a. In the context of the lives they lived, the suffering they endured, the scriptures they left behind, there is only reasonable conclusion...
 - b. ...They were in fact “eyewitnesses of His majesty”!

[The foundation of our precious faith, then, rests upon the testimony of the apostles. Even Jesus realized this would be the case (cf. **Jn 17:20**). But there is even more that serves to support our faith in Jesus Christ...]

II. THE TESTIMONY OF DIVINELY ORIGINATED PROPHECY (19-21)

A. “WE ALSO HAVE THE PROPHETIC WORD MADE MORE SURE” ...

1. The reference here is to the prophecies of the Old Testament
 - a. Which bore witness to the coming Messiah - e.g., **Isa 9:6-7; 53:1-12**
 - b. To which the apostles often appealed in their efforts to convince others that Jesus was the Christ - e.g., **Ac 17:2-3**
2. These prophecies have been *“made more sure”* by their very fulfillment in Jesus!
 - a. Before their fulfillment, one could only hope such words were really from God
 - b. In their fulfillment, our faith is not only strengthened in the subject of such prophecies (Jesus Christ), but in the origin of the prophecies themselves!

3. It is these fulfilled prophecies which serve to support our faith...

B. “WHICH YOU DO WELL TO HEED AS A LIGHT THAT SHINES...”

1. Though fulfilled, Christians should still carefully study the Old Testament Scriptures
2. Even as Paul commanded Timothy to do - **2 Ti 3:14-15**
3. For their value is like *“a light that shines in a dark place”*
 - a. Like apostolic testimony, they help to confirm our faith in Jesus
 - b. They also help the Christian become “wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” - cf. **2 Ti 3:15**
 - c. They are therefore a source for developing patience, comfort and hope - cf. **Ro 15:4**
4. And they will serve such purpose *“until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts”*
 - a. A likely reference to the coming of our Lord, described by John as “the Bright and Morning Star” - cf. **Re 22:16**
 - b. Whose coming will be seen by all (“every eye will see Him”), but will be appreciated most fully “in the hearts” of those who anxiously await Him!

C. UNDERSTANDING THE ORIGIN OF PROPHECY...

1. To appreciate the value of prophecy in supporting our faith, it is important to know how prophecy originates
2. As Peter explains...
 - a. *“no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation”*
 - 1) This phrase is difficult, and has been variously translated:
 - a) “No prophecy of scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation” (RSV; cf. KJV, NKJV, NASB, and JB)
 - b) “No prophecy of Scripture ever came about by a prophet’s own ideas” (SEB; cf. NIV)
 - 2) I believe both the immediate context (**v. 21**) and the remote context (**1 Pe 1:10-12**) of Peter’s comments support the latter translation (b)
 - b. *“for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit”*
 - 1) This explains what Peter meant in **verse 20**
 - 2) Thus the prophecies of the Old Testament were not the views or concepts of mere men, but the expressions of Spirit-inspired spokesmen for God!
3. Realizing this, their fulfilled prophecies serve to strengthen our faith...
 - a. Our faith in the Old Testament as the inspired word of God!
 - b. Our faith in Jesus as the Messiah, of Whom the inspired prophets wrote!

CONCLUSION

1. Indeed, our faith is certainly “precious”, because it rests upon the weighty testimony of...
 - a. **Apostolic eyewitnesses**
 - 1) Who saw and heard the things Jesus did
 - 2) Who despite great suffering never recanted their testimony
 - b. **Divinely inspired prophecy**
 - 1) Spoken in ages past by men moved by the Spirit of God

- 2) Confirmed to be true by their fulfillment
2. Such faith is not blind or credulous, but a conviction based upon solid evidence!
3. Is this the sort of faith in Jesus you have? It should be, for by such faith you can have...
 - a. Eternal life - cf. **Jn 20:30-31**
 - b. Remission of sins - cf. **Ac 10:43**

But it must also be an obedient faith (cf. **Ro 1:5; 6:17; 16:26**), and the first steps of faith are clearly outlined by Jesus and His apostles... - cf. **Mk 16:15-16; Ac 2:36-38**

The Destructiveness Of False Teachers

2 Peter 2:1-3

INTRODUCTION

1. I suggested in the first lesson of this series that the theme of 2nd Peter could be “**Beware, But Grow**”, based upon Peter’s concluding remarks in **2 Pe 3:17-18**
2. As we enter the second chapter, we find Peter’s attention turned to **false teachers**, and the need to beware of them...
 - a. Just as there were **false prophets** in Old Testament times, we can expect **false teachers** in our day - **2 Pe 2:1**
 - b. The term for “false teacher” is **pseudodidaskalos** {**psyoo-dod-id-as’-kal-os**} and is defined as “a spurious teacher, i.e. propagator of erroneous Christian doctrine:--false teacher”
 - 1) In the Bible, the term is found only in this passage
 - 2) Peter’s use of it and his description of these “false teachers” throughout this chapter strongly suggests that:
 - a) It means more than simply someone who happens to teach error out of ignorance of the truth (such as someone sincerely mistaken)
 - b) He has in mind those who know full well what they are doing and are purposely trying to mislead others!
3. While it may be true there are “blind leaders of the blind” (**Mt 15:13-14**), Peter is not describing “blind leaders” per se, but individuals much more sinister!

[In this lesson we shall consider the first three verses of this chapter, in which we learn about “**The Destructiveness Of False Teachers**”. Beginning with...]

I. THEIR DESTRUCTIVE HERESIES

A. DEFINING “HERESY”...

1. The word in Greek is **hairesis** {**hah’-ee-res-is**} which means:
 - a. Choosing, choice
 - b. That which is chosen
 - c. A body of men following their own tenets (sect or party), used of:
 - 1) The Sadducees - **Ac 5:17**
 - 2) The Pharisees - **Ac 15:5**
 - 3) The Christians - **Ac 24:5**
 - d. Dissensions arising from diversity of opinions and aims (e.g., denominational division as it exists today)
2. It not only refers to a “sect” or “party”, but sometimes to the doctrine(s) that produce the division
3. That seems to be the way Peter uses it here: referring to the doctrines the false teachers would “bring in” that would cause division

B. “EVEN DENYING THE LORD WHO BOUGHT THEM...” (1)

1. This may refer to either:
 - a. What their doctrine promoted
 - b. What their doctrine produced in those who followed it
2. We know that soon after Peter wrote there were those (precursors of the “Gnostics”) who literally denied some things about the Lord - cf. **2 Jn 7**
3. Were these “false teachers” at one time true Christians?
 - a. The phrase “who bought them” certainly suggests so! - cf. **Ac 20:28; 1 Co 6:20; 1 Pe 1:18-19**
 - b. They are later described as those who had “escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior...” - **2 Pe 2:20**

C. WHY THEIR DOCTRINES ARE “DESTRUCTIVE”... (2)

1. **Because “many will follow their destructive ways”...**
 - a. Instead of following the Lord as they should
 - b. Who is the only way of salvation
 - c. Thus separating themselves from the true source of salvation
2. **Because of them “the way of truth will be blasphemed”**
 - a. Those in the world will speak evil of those who profess to follow Christ, thinking false teachers represent Christianity (“If that is what it means to be Christian...”)
 - a. Or they will speak evil of the divisions that will occur (“Hey, if you Christians have the truth, why can’t you agree on what it is?”)

[Knowing that such “false teachers” will come, and that their doctrines will be destructive, what indications can we look for to be able to identify them? Peter describes for us...]

II. THEIR DESTRUCTIVE METHODS

A. THEY WILL WORK “SECRETLY”... (1)

1. **“...who will secretly bring in destructive heresies”**
2. Knowing that error cannot stand the light of the truth, they will resort to working “behind the scenes”
3. Truth has nothing to fear from investigation, so if one believes they have the truth they will not object to open and fair evaluation
4. If a teacher is not willing to let his doctrine be examined openly by others, let that be a warning sign!

B. THEY WILL APPEAL TO “COVETOUSNESS”... (3)

1. **“By covetousness they will exploit you...”**
2. Trained in covetousness themselves, they will allure through this “lust of the flesh” - cf. **2 Pe 2:14, 18**
3. They will offer things that the flesh often desires: wealth, health, power, influence
4. Sounds a lot like the “gospel of health and wealth”, doesn’t it?

C. THEY WILL USE “DECEPTIVE WORDS”... (3)

1. **“...they will exploit you with deceptive words”**
2. Peter later adds “...they speak great swelling words of emptiness” - cf. **2 Pe 2:18**
3. They will be smooth talkers, who know exactly what they are doing: deceiving those who follow them!
4. If a person cannot give you “book, chapter, and verse”, but must appeal to a lot of “theological mumble-jumble”, watch out!

[With this awareness of the false teachers’ “modus operandi”, we are less likely to be deceived by them. Of course, being well-grounded in the truth of the gospel is the best protection against being misled! Finally, we notice that Peter describes...]

III. THEIR DESTRUCTIVE END

A. THEY WILL “BRING ON THEMSELVES SWIFT DESTRUCTION”... (1)

1. Not only will their doctrines destroy others, but themselves as well
2. When the destruction comes, it will be “swift”
 - a. How often have we seen the world of the “false teacher” fall apart so quickly!
 - b. E.g., as in the case of Jim Bakker and Jimmy Swaggart
3. While their destruction will be swift when it is “executed”, the execution itself may not come as quickly as we might like, which may explain why Peter goes on to reassure that...

B. “THEIR JUDGMENT HAS NOT BEEN IDLE, AND THEIR DESTRUCTION DOES NOT SLUMBER...” (3)

1. When there are “false teachers”, God is not idle, nor does He slumber when it comes to their judgment and destruction
2. As Peter goes on to describe in **2 Pe 2:4-9**, God did not spare those who were guilty
3. But He may choose to delay the execution of judgment upon the ungodly, if He feels that by doing so some may repent - cf. **2 Pe 3:7-9**
4. But when the time is right, judgment and destruction will be swift! - e.g., **2 Pe 3:10**

CONCLUSION

1. This is not the end of Peter’s discourse concerning “false teachers”, for he will have more to say concerning...
 - a. The Doom Of False Teachers - **2 Pe 2:4-9**
 - b. The Depravity Of False Teachers - **2 Pe 2:10-17**
 - c. The Deceptions Of False Teachers - **2 Pe 2:18-22**-- The Lord willing, we shall consider each of these things in future lessons
2. But in considering **“The Destructiveness Of False Teachers”**, we have been warned such teachers exist and that if we are not careful, we will “follow their destructive ways”!

The only sure prevention is to follow Him who is “the way, the truth, and the life”, and to “continue steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine” - cf. **Jn 14:16; Ac 2:42**

The Doom Of False Teachers

Peter 2:4-9

INTRODUCTION

1. In warning that “false teachers” will arise, leading many to follow their destructive ways, Peter also spoke of their coming judgment...
 - a. “...bring on themselves swift destruction” - **2 Pe 2:1**
 - b. “for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber.” - **2 Pe 2:3**

2. To illustrate that the “false teachers” face certain condemnation, Peter gives three examples of the righteous judgment of God in the past...
 - a. The angels who sinned - **2 Pe 2:4**
 - b. The ancient world - **2 Pe 2:5**
 - c. The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah - **2 Pe 2:6-9**

3. In this lesson...
 - a. We will briefly review what is known about these three “case histories” of divine judgment
 - b. And offer hope by noticing Peter’s observations concerning the righteous who found themselves in the midst of these judgments

[Let’s begin, then, by reviewing the first “case history”...]

I. THE ANGELS WHO SINNED (4)

A. VERY LITTLE IS ACTUALLY SAID ABOUT THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE ANGELS’ SIN...

1. Jude makes reference to it in his epistle - **Ju 6**
 - a. Somehow, some angels “did not keep their proper domain”
 - b. They “left their own habitation”
2. A common interpretation is that this refers to what is found in **Gen 6:1-4**
 - a. Where “sons of God” is taken to refer to angels (as used in **Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7**)
 - b. In support of this interpretation (cf. Expositor’s Bible Commentary)...
 - 1) It was common in Jewish literature (Enoch 6:2; 1 QapGen col. 2)
 - 2) The three examples (angels, Flood, and cities of the plain) all come one after another in the early chapters of Genesis
 - c. In rebuttal (cf. The New Testament Commentary, Kistemaker)...
 - 1) The angels are spiritual beings without physical bodies and are incapable of procreation
 - 2) Jesus taught that at the resurrection, people, like the angels in heaven “neither marry nor be given in marriage” - **Mt 22:30**
 - d. But then again, it might be asked...
 - 1) If angels could take on bodies to eat, why not to procreate? - cf. **Gen 18:1-8**

- 2) These are angels who “left their proper domain”, could not what Jesus said be true only of angels who are not rebellious?
3. Another view is that the sin of angels is something that took place before The Fall...
 - a. As vividly portrayed in John Milton’s “Paradise Lost”
 - b. The scriptural evidence is very vague, dependent upon passages that may be taken out of context

B. WHAT IS VERY CLEAR ARE THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE ANGELS’ JUDGMENT...!

1. God did not spare them, **“but cast them down to hell”**
 - a. The word for “hell” is **tartaroo** {tar-tar-o’-o}
 - b. *“Tartarus, thought of by the Greeks as a subterranean place lower than Hades where divine punishment was meted out, was so regarded in Jewish apocalyptic as well”* (BAG, p. 813)
 - c. Peter may have simply chosen to use this well-known concept to convey the point that the angels are in a place of torment
2. God **“delivered them to chains of darkness”**
 - a. The NIV says “gloomy dungeons”, which is a possible translation
 - b. Jude describes it as “everlasting chains under darkness” - **Ju 6**
3. There they remain, **“reserved for judgment”**
 - a. As Jude puts it: “for the judgment of the great Day” - **Ju 6**
 - b. Similar to the description of Jesus in **Lk 16:19-31**, where the wicked rich man was in torment awaiting the judgment at the Last Day

[Peter’s argument here is “from the greater to the lesser”: If God did not spare angels who beheld His glory when they sinned, He will certainly punish false teachers who purposely lead His people astray! And now, our next “case history”...]

II. THE ANCIENT WORLD (5)

A. GOD USED THE FLOOD TO JUDGE THE UNGODLY...

1. The “ancient world” is that antediluvian world described in **Gen 6:5-7, 11-12**
 - a. In which “the wickedness of man was great in the earth”
 - b. Where “every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually”
 - c. And where the earth was “corrupt before God” and “filled with violence”
 - d. Which so grieved God that He found it necessary to destroy both man and beast
2. Again, Peter’s argument is “from the greater to the lesser”...
 - a. If God destroyed the whole world because of their ungodliness
 - b. Will he not destroy these false teachers who “deny the Lord who bought them”?

B. BUT GOD SPARED NOAH...

1. The same flood used to destroy the world was used to spare Noah! - cf. **1 Pe 3:20**
2. Here is where we begin to find comfort for those who find themselves surrounded by the ungodly...
 - a. God took notice of Noah - cf. **Gen 6:8; 7:1**
 - b. Noah was one who walked with God, even in the midst of a perverse generation

- c. He was a “preacher of righteousness”, both in deed and word
- 3. So while God was bringing judgment upon the ungodly...
 - a. He did not lose sight of the godly!
 - b. He provided for their deliverance from the judgment that came!

[In this way we are encouraged to remain faithful in two ways: not only will God bring doom upon the “false teachers”, but He will preserve those who remain faithful. This twofold assurance is continued as we consider the final “case history”...]

III. THE CITIES OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH (6-9)

A. GOD TURNED THEM INTO ASHES...

- 1. This judgment is described vividly in **Gen 19:24-28**
- 2. Why this terrible judgment?
 - a. Jude says it was because they had “given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh” - **Ju 7**
 - b. The LORD said it was “because their sin is very grievous” - **Gen 18:20**
 - c. We see a sample of it in **Gen 19:4-11**
- 3. Both Peter and Jude make the point that Sodom and Gomorrah are an “example”
 - a. An example “to those who afterward would live ungodly” - **2 Pe 2:6**
 - b. An example of those “suffering the vengeance of eternal fire” - **Ju 7**

B. BUT GOD DELIVERED RIGHTEOUS LOT...

- 1. Here is another example of how God does not lose sight of His faithful when He brings judgment upon the ungodly
- 2. Lot was delivered because...
 - a. He was “righteous”, an adjective used three times by Peter:
 - 1) “righteous Lot” - **2 Pe 2:7**
 - 2) “that righteous man” - **2 Pe 2:8**
 - 3) “his righteous soul” - **2 Pe 2:8**
 - b. He “was oppressed with the filthy conduct of the wicked”
 - c. His soul was “tormented...from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds”
- 3. Like Noah, Lot had been “righteous before Me in this generation” - cf. **Gen 7:1**

C. THIS LEADS PETER TO SUMMARIZE THIS SECTION IN VERSE 9...

- 1. “The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations...”
 - a. As shown in the example of Noah and Lot
 - b. This should encourage us to remain faithful to the Lord
- 2. “...and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment”
 - a. As illustrated in the three cases we have considered
 - b. Note that the unjust are reserved “**under punishment**” for the day of judgment
 - 1) This suggests that the wicked are tormented during the “intermediate state” between death and the resurrection
 - 2) As illustrated in the story of the rich man and Lazarus - cf. **Lk 16:19-31**
 - c. Should this not warn those who may be tempted to follow after “false teachers”?

CONCLUSION

1. Peter is not through with his warnings about “false teachers”...
 - a. Having described their “destructiveness” - **2 Pe 2:1-3**
 - b. And confirming their “doom” - **2 Pe 2:4-9**
...he has more to say about their “depravity” and their “deceptions” in the rest of this chapter

2. But what can we conclude from this section of scripture?
 - a. The judgment and destruction of “false teachers” does not “slumber”; God’s judgments in the past guarantee that there is “the day of judgment” in the future!
 - b. Those who remain faithful to the Lord will be spared like Noah and Lot were!

3. So when we find ourselves...
 - a. “oppressed with the filthy conduct of the wicked”
 - b. “tormented...from day to day by seeing and hearing lawless deeds”
...look to the Lord for His judgment and deliverance!

“Our Father in heaven...deliver us from the evil one”! - cf. **Mt 6:9-13**

The Depravity Of False Teachers

2 Peter 2:10-17

INTRODUCTION

1. In his discourse against “false teachers”, Peter has written strongly and harshly against these individuals...
 - a. They will bring in “destructive heresies”, and bring on themselves and those who follow them “destruction” - **2 Pe 2:1-3**
 - b. Their doom is certain, for God knows how “to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment”, as illustrated by the examples in **2 Pe 2:4-9**
2. Why such strong words? Is Peter justified in writing so harshly against these “false teachers”?
3. The answer is “yes”, for by inspiration Peter knows the true extent to which these depraved individuals have fallen...
 - a. Again, these “false teachers” are not just people who in their ignorance are guilty of teaching error
 - b. Rather, they are very much aware of their deceptions and what they are doing!

[In our text for this lesson, we learn from Peter just how serious is “**The Depravity Of False Teachers**”. For example..]

I. THEY “REVILE” AGAINST THOSE IN AUTHORITY (10-12)

A. NOTICE THEIR CHARACTER...

1. They “walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness” - **10**
2. They are “presumptuous, self-willed” - **10**
3. By so walking after the flesh, they became little more than “natural brute beasts” - **12**

B. IN THIS CONDITION...

1. **They “despise authority” - 10**
 - a. They do not appreciate the principles of authority and submission - cf. **1 Pe 2:13-17**
 - b. They feel no need to submit to those over them
2. **They “are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries” - 10**
 - a. The word for “dignitaries” is **doxa {dox'-ah}** and literally means “glories”
 - b. It can refer to human dignitaries such as church or civic leaders, but also celestial beings (such as good and fallen angels)
 - c. The context of **verse 11** and the parallel passage in **Ju 8-9** suggests that fallen angels (those mentioned in **2 Pe 2:4**) may be the “dignitaries” spoken of here
 - d. Thus in some way these individuals would speak derogatorily of “fallen angels”, something even angels “greater in power and might” would not do!
3. **They “speak evil of the things they do not understand” -12**
 - a. Once again Peter’s charge is that they “speak evil”

- b. The charge appears to be in the way they speak, even of fallen angels...
 - 1) With an attitude of despise towards those in authority
 - 2) When they really are not in a position to know the whole situation
- c. With such arrogance and evil speaking, they corrupt themselves! - **Ju 10**

[If the Scriptures condemn those who speak evil of “fallen angels”, what does that say of those who speak evil of “fallen individuals”, whether they be church or civic leaders? May Peter’s words encourage us to be very careful about such things. The depravity of these “false teachers” is seen further as we consider how...]

II. THEY “REVEL” WITH GREAT PLEASURE (13-14)

A. THEY LOVE TO “CAROUSE”...

1. The word “carouse” (or “revel”, the KJV uses “riot” and “sporting”) refers to extreme indulgence in sensual pleasures; dissipation
2. They count it pleasure to “carouse in the daytime” - **13**
 - a. This is not to suggest that it is all right to carouse at night
 - b. But just demonstrates how depraved these individuals are!
3. Like “spots and blemishes”, they carouse in their deceptions “while they feast with you” - **13**
 - a. They take advantage of gatherings with Christians
 - b. This they do with skillful deception

B. FOR THEY HAVE CORRUPTED “EYES” AND “HEART”...

1. Their eyes are “**full of adultery**” (cf. **Mt 5:28**) - **14**
 - a. “that cannot cease from sin” (this speaks of their depravity)
 - b. “...beguiling unstable souls” (taking advantage of the immature)
2. Their heart is “**trained in covetous practices**” - **14**
 - a. They are skilled in how to get what they want
 - b. And what they want all pertains to the flesh! (as implied by the term “adultery”)

[In such depravity they have truly become “**accursed children**” (**14**). That they are even described as “accursed children” is another indication that these “false teachers” were once true Christians - cf. “denying the Lord who bought them” (**1**) and “after they have escaped the pollutions of the world...” (**20**). Another such indication is seen as we consider our last point concerning the depravity of these false teachers...]

III. THEY “REVOLT” AGAINST THE RIGHT WAY (15-16)

A. “THEY HAVE FORSAKEN THE RIGHT WAY AND GONE ASTRAY...”

1. It is hard to forsake what you never had, or to go astray if you were never in the right way
2. Therefore this phrase of Peter...
 - a. Lends support to the idea that these “false teachers” were erring Christians
 - b. Sadly adds to the description of how far one can fall from the Lord

B. “FOLLOWING THE WAY OF BALAAM...”

1. Like the prophet Balaam, they were swayed by the “wages of unrighteousness”
2. Here Peter is evidently making a play on words, for he used the same phrase earlier in a totally different way
 - a. In **verse 13**, the “wages of unrighteousness” refers to the **eternal** compensation one receives for their sins (condemnation)
 - b. In **verse 15**, the “wages of unrighteousness” refers to the **momentary** compensation one receives for their sins (money, fulfillment of fleshly desires)
3. But remember that Balaam was rebuked and restrained by a dumb donkey who spoke - **Num 22:22-35**
4. How much more should we take heed when it is the voice of an inspired apostle (Peter) who seeks to rebuke and restrain the madness of “false teachers”!

CONCLUSION (17)

1. In **verse 17**, we are given two illustrations that describe the depravity of these false teachers...
 - a. They are “**wells without water**”
 - b. They are “**clouds carried by a tempest**”-- Both illustrations describe things which promise much (i.e., water), but deliver nothing!
2. So it is with these “false teachers”, who while promising much, are so depraved themselves that there is only one thing awaiting them...
 - a. “**to whom the gloom of darkness is reserved forever**”
 - b. I.e., the same judgment given to the angels who sinned - cf. **2 Pe 2:4**-- How ironic, that these individuals who were so bold to revile fallen angels, will suffer the same punishment!
3. Peter will have more to say about these false teachers in the final section of this chapter, especially with regards to their “deceptions” and how they fail to deliver what they promise

In the meantime, remember that it is not sufficient to just “beware” of false teachers, we must also be “growing” in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ (**2 Pe 3:17-18**). Is this the case with you...?

The Deceptions Of False Teachers

2 Peter 2:18-22

INTRODUCTION

1. Peter's warning against "false teachers" has to this point included a description of:
 - a. The destructiveness of false teachers - **2 Pe 2:1-3**
 - b. The doom of false teachers - **2 Pe 2:4-9**
 - c. The depravity of false teachers - **2 Pe 2:10-17**
2. **Verse 17** summarizes their depravity by describing them as...
 - a. "wells without water"
 - b. "clouds carried by a tempest"...that while they promise much, they do not truly deliver what they promise
3. Thus they are "deceptive", and the deceptions of false teachers become even more apparent as we consider the last section of chapter two

[**Verses 18-22** vividly depict the manner in which these "false teachers" are deceptive, beginning with...]

I. THEY ARE DECEPTIVE IN THEIR METHODS (18)

A. THEY USE DECEPTIVE WORDS...

1. Peter had warned earlier that "they will exploit you with deceptive words" - **2 Pe 2:3**
2. Now he says they "speak great swelling words of emptiness" - **2 Pe 2:18**
 - a. Using eloquent speech that sounds impressive and promising
 - b. But lacking true substance

B. THEY ACTUALLY APPEAL TO THE FLESH...

1. So deceiving are these teachers, one may think that they are winning him over to their way through their sound doctrines
2. But their true allurements are through "the lusts of the flesh"
 - a. Which could include such things as immorality, materialism, envy, pride - cf. **Ga 5:19-21; 1 Jn 2:15-17**
 - b. Thus they offer promises that really have their appeal to what the flesh will gain
 - c. Is this not the case with those who promise "health and wealth" with the gospel?
3. It is even "through licentiousness" that these teachers entice unstable souls...
 - a. Licentiousness in the Greek is **aselgeia {as-elg'-i-a}** which means "unbridled lust, excess, licentiousness, lasciviousness, wantonness, outrageousness, shamelessness, insolence"
 - b. They shamelessly flaunt their fleshly appeals, while passing it off as something proper
 - c. E.g., displaying excessive wealth as something one might expect to receive as a follower of their teaching

[Through such deceptive methods, they seek to allure those who have “escaped from those who live in error” (18b). This leads us to Peter’s next point...]

II. THEY ARE DECEPTIVE IN THEIR PROMISES (19)

A. THEY PROMISE “LIBERTY”, BUT THEY DON’T DELIVER...

1. Especially if it is liberty from the “lusts of the flesh”
2. For as we have seen, they make their allurements through the “lusts of the flesh” - cf. **2 Pe 2:1, 18**
3. Thus they enslave through the very thing they promise deliverance from!

B. THEY PROMISE “LIBERTY”, WHILE THEY THEMSELVES ARE SLAVES...

1. They are “slaves of corruption” trying to promise what they don’t have
2. As evidence of their “corruption”, we have already seen...
 - a. They attempt to exploit through covetousness - **2 Pe 2:3**
 - b. They “walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness” - **2 Pe 2:10**
 - c. They “despise authority” - **2 Pe 2:10**
 - d. They “speak evil of the things they do not understand” - **2 Pe 2:12**
 - e. They “count it pleasure to carouse in the daytime” - **2 Pe 2:13**
 - f. They have “eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin” - **2 Pe 2:14**
 - g. They have “a heart trained in covetous practices” - **2 Pe 2:14**
3. Thus these teachers who promise liberty are themselves...
 - a. “overcome”
 - b. “brought into bondage”
4. Indeed, they are worse off now than before (**20-22**)
 - a. Their latter end is worse than their beginning
 - b. It would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness - cf. **Lk 12:47-48**
 - c. They have become like the dog returning to his vomit, and the washed sow wallowing again in the mire!

-- These last three verses raise a question that will be answered below

[Deceptive in both method and promise, we can appreciate why Peter would spend so much time warning about them. Before concluding this lesson (and chapter), it might be prudent to attempt answer two questions that are commonly raised by Peter’s discourse on false teachers...]

III. CONCLUDING QUESTIONS

A. WERE THESE FALSE TEACHERS ONCE TRUE CHRISTIANS...?

1. They were “denying the Lord who bought them” - **2 Pe 2:1**
 - a. These are souls who at one time had been “bought by the Lord”
 - b. Peter had written in his first epistle that we are redeemed (bought back) by the precious blood of Christ - **1 Pe 1:18-19**
 - c. Thus, these are souls who at one time were “blood bought individuals”
2. “They have forsaken the right way and gone astray” - **2 Pe 2:15**

- a. The implication here is that they were once on the right way
 - b. For it is impossible to forsake something you never had, or to go astray if you were always lost
3. **“...they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome...” - 2 Pe 2:20**
- a. Compare: “having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” - **2 Pe 1:4**
 - 1) What was said of Christians at the beginning of the epistle...
 - 2) ...is now used to describe these false teachers!
 - b. They had escaped the pollutions of the world “through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” - **2 Pe 2:20**
 - 1) Remember that this “knowledge” includes such things as listed in **2 Pe 1:5-8**
 - 2) Through such “saving” knowledge, then, they had escaped, but are now enslaved again
4. **“...it has happened to them according to the true proverb:” - 2 Pe 2:22**
- a. They like dogs have returned to what they had gotten rid of at one point, and are like a washed sow returning to wallowing in the mire
 - b. Some try to say these proverbs reveal that these false teachers were always “dogs” and “hogs”, never truly changed on the inside, which explains their returning to the vomit and mire
 - c. But in the overall context of this chapter, that seems to be straining the purpose of the proverbs

[Of course, the question about these false teachers having been true Christians at one time leads right into another question...]

B. CAN CHRISTIANS SIN SO AS TO BE LOST...?

1. If these “false teachers” were once true Christians, the answer is clearly “yes”, for consider their end...
 - a. “bring on themselves swift destruction” - **2 Pe 2:1**
 - b. “for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber” - **2 Pe 2:3**
 - c. “to whom the gloom of darkness is reserved forever” - **2 Pe 2:17**
2. If the answer is “no”, then why the warning by Peter in this epistle?
 - a. Why warn those who have “escaped from those who live in error”, if there is no real danger of becoming “overcome” and “brought into bondage” again? - **2 Pe 2:18-19**
 - b. Why the concluding warning to “beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked”, if it is impossible for Christians to fall away? - **2 Pe 3:17**
3. But what about those verses that promise “the security of the believer”, such as **Jn 10:28-29**?
 - a. Such passages are promising assurance for the “believer”, i.e., one who remains a believer; if we remain faithful, our salvation is secure - cf. **Re 2:10**
 - b. But the Bible clearly warns that a “believer” can develop an evil heart of “unbelief”; should that happen, the promises of assurance do not apply - cf. **He 3:12-4:2**

CONCLUSION

1. The very real possibility of apostasy and losing one's salvation helps us to understand the grave concern expressed by Peter in his epistle...
 - a. He believes Christians can "fall from your own steadfastness"
 - b. He believes Christians can be "led away with the error of the wicked"
2. For these reasons he takes so much time describing the "false teachers" who are losing their salvation and trying to take others with them!
3. But if we can remember what Peter says about...
 - a. The destructiveness of false teachers
 - b. The doom of false teachers
 - c. The depravity of false teachers
 - d. The deceptions of false teachers...then we are not likely to be swayed by such individuals

But "false teachers" are not our only concern, we must be careful not to be deterred in our spiritual pilgrimage by "scoffers" along the way. Such individuals Peter will address in the next chapter...

When People Scoff About The Lord's Return

2 Peter 3:1-9

INTRODUCTION

1. A wonderful promise that serves to motivate Christians towards godly living is that concerning our Lord's return...
 - a. A promise made first by Jesus Himself - **Jn 14:1-3**
 - b. A promise made at His ascension into heaven - **Ac 1:9-11**
 - c. A promise not far from the lips of devoted disciples...
 - 1) ***"O Lord, come!"*** - **1 Co 16:22**
 - 2) ***"Even so, come, Lord Jesus!"*** - **Re 22:20**
2. But it is also a promise that some delight to scoff (i.e., to mock, deride, reproach, ridicule) - cf. **2 Pe 3:3-4**
3. As we patiently await the coming of the Lord, what can we do when faced by those who ridicule the hope that we have?
4. Peter addresses this concern in **2 Pe 3:1-9**, and will serve as the basis for this lesson entitled:

"When People Scoff About The Lord's Return"

[The key element to dealing with such scoffers can be summarized in one word: **"remember"**. This becomes evident as we find Peter stressing that we should first...]

I. REMEMBER THAT SCOFFERS ARE TO BE EXPECTED (1-4)

A. ONCE AGAIN, WE SEE THE VALUE OF BEING REMINDED...

1. Earlier in this epistle, Peter stressed his desire to remind them - **2 Pe 1:12-15**
2. Now, he does it again - **2 Pe 3:1-2**
3. In both passages, his desire is to "stir up" their pure minds - **2 Pe 1:13; 3:1**

B. WE ARE TO BE ESPECIALLY MINDFUL OF....

1. **The words spoken before by the holy prophets**
 - a. Peter may have reference to New Testament prophets
 - b. But he might also be referring to Old Testament prophets, to whom we were told to give heed earlier in this epistle - **2 Pe 1:19**
2. **The commandment of the apostles of the Lord and Savior**
 - a. As the Lord's "ambassadors" (cf. **2 Co 5:20**), the apostles speak for the Lord Himself - cf. **1 Co 14:37**
 - b. Therefore, we need to "continue steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine" - **Ac 2:42**

C. IF WE ARE MINDFUL OF THEIR WORDS, SCOFFERS WILL NOT BE

UNEXPECTED...

1. **We will know that they will come “in the last days” - 2 Pe 3:3a**
 - a. A reference to the age of the Messiah
 - b. Which began with His first coming, and will be culminated at His second coming - cf. **Ac 2:16-17; 1 Co 10:11; He 1:1-2**
 - c. Thus we can expect scoffers at any time during the “Christian dispensation”
2. **We will know the motivation behind their scoffing... - 2 Pe 3:3b**
 - a. For they will be “walking according to their own lusts”
 - b. Knowing that coming of the Lord is designed to judge the ungodly, they “scoff” as a way to soothe their guilty conscience
3. **We will know the major argument they are likely to use - 2 Pe 3:4**
 - a. Their argument will be: “all things continue as they were...”
 - b. An argument akin to the doctrine of “uniformitarianism”

[Knowing that scoffers will come, and what their charges will be, we can prepare for it. But again, only if we will be sure to remember what the holy prophets and apostles have said. For example, the apostle Peter would have us...]

II. REMEMBER THAT GOD’S WORD IS CONSISTENT (5-7)**A. THE SCOFFERS FORGET ABOUT THE FLOOD...**

1. In arguing that “all things continue as they were from the beginning”, they overlook the fact such was not the case with the flood - **2 Pe 3:5-6**
2. Peter says they “willfully” forget...
 - a. They purposefully choose not to remember an event that proves their argument wrong
 - b. Of course, their desire is not to determine truth, but to justify their lifestyle
 - c. Many people today resort to the same tactics...
 - 1) Conveniently ignore evidence that would weaken their case
 - 2) Ridicule the opposition rather than dealing with it fairly and seriously

B. BUT THE FLOOD IS EVIDENCE OF THE CERTAINTY OF GOD’S WORD...

1. By God’s word, the world was once destroyed by “water” - **2 Pe 2:5-6**
2. By the same word (God’s word), the universe is “kept in store” (treasured up, reserved) for “fire” - **2 Pe 2:7**
3. The same word that promised and carried through with the promise about the flood, is the word that promises and will carry through about the Lord’s coming and the conflagration to accompany it
4. Since God kept His first promise to destroy the world, we can expect Him to keep His present promise as well!

[“But,” the scoffer might say, “it has been so long since the promise was made!” Indeed, for us today it has been nearly two thousand years since the promise of the Lord’s return and the world’s destruction was made. But as Peter continues, we should...]

III. REMEMBER THAT GOD IS NOT AFFECTED BY TIME (8)

A. UNLIKE MAN, GOD IS NOT A CREATURE OF TIME...

1. “with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.”
2. This is not a passage revealing some sort of key to interpreting prophecy...
 - a. Such as, “a day in prophecy equals a thousand years in fulfillment”
 - b. For if so, then why could one just as easily say “a thousand years in prophecy equals a day in fulfillment”?
 - c. Indeed, such efforts are a clear “twisting” (cf. **2 Pe 3:16**) of this passage
3. The point is simply that time is irrelevant to God

B. SO WHILE IT MAY HAVE BEEN TWO THOUSAND YEARS...

1. To God that is no different than two days! - cf. **Ps 90:4**
2. Another two thousand years could pass, and God’s Word would not be weakened at all...
 - a. It was two thousands years before God fulfilled His promise to **Abraham** (“in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed” - **Gen 12:3**)
 - b. It was at least four thousand years before He fulfilled His promise to **the serpent** (“And I will put enmity...between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.” - **Gen 3:15**)
3. Since God kept His promise about the first coming of Christ, we can expect Him to fulfill the promise of His Son’s return!
4. As for the “times and seasons”, that should not be our concern - cf. **Ac 1:7**

[Finally, we will not be moved by the scoffers’ arguments about the delay of the Lord’s return if we...]

IV. REMEMBER THAT GOD IS LONGSUFFERING, NOT SLACK (9)

A. SOME MIGHT THINK THE LORD IS SLACK CONCERNING HIS PROMISE...

1. It **has** been nearly two thousand years since the promise was made
2. And while **man** might consider that slackness, there is another reason for the delay

B. THE LORD IS LONGSUFFERING, NOT WILLING THAT ANY PERISH...

1. While God is a just God, He is also a merciful and loving God
2. While His **justice** requires “judgment and perdition of ungodly men”, His **love** and **mercy** is willing to give them time to repent
3. This explains the Lord delay in returning: He has given every generation that has lived during the last two thousand years time to repent!
4. Thus He has “suffered long”, hoping that people will repent...
 - a. Such goodness is designed to encourage people to repent - cf. **Ro 2:4**
 - b. But for those who despise His longsuffering...
 - 1) They are “treasuring up...wrath in the day of wrath” - cf. **Ro 2:5-6**
 - 2) Just as the Lord has “treasured up” the heavens and earth for fire at the day of judgment - cf. **2 Pe 2:7**

CONCLUSION

1. Peter will have more to say about “the day of the Lord” and what will occur when He comes again, in the next section (**2 Pe 3:10-13**)

2. But that we might not lose heart, nor be discouraged by the scoffers who will ridicule the idea of the Lord's return, Peter has left these words by which we can "*stir up your pure minds by way of reminder*" - **2 Pe 3:1**

3. Has the thought of the Lord's return and the day of judgment stirred you up?
 - a. **Remember that the Lord wants you to be saved...**
 - 1) He sent His Son to die for your sins
 - 2) He has delayed the sending of His Son a second time, to give you time to repent
 - b. **Remember, though, that in His justice things are being "treasured up"**
 - 1) The heavens and earth are "kept in store" (treasured up) for the day of judgment
 - 2) Those who despise God's longsuffering are "treasuring up" for themselves "wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God" - cf. **Ro 2:5**
 - c. **How much better, then...**
 - 1) To receive the "riches of His grace" in obedience to the gospel of His grace
 - 2) Instead of receiving the "treasures of His wrath" to be given at the day of judgment!

As Peter said on the Day of Pentecost, "*Be saved from this perverse generation.*" (**Ac 2:40**) The context reveals how one might be saved - cf. **Ac 2:36-41**

The Day Of The Lord

2 Peter 3:10-13

INTRODUCTION

1. In our previous study, we saw where Peter encouraged us not to be troubled by those who scoff at the promise of the Lord's return...
 - a. Remember that scoffers are to be expected - **2 Pe 3:1-4**
 - b. Remember that God's Word is consistent - **2 Pe 3:5-7**
 - c. Remember that God is not affected by time - **2 Pe 3:8**
 - d. Remember that God is longsuffering, not slack - **2 Pe 3:9**
2. In **verse 7**, he briefly alluded to what will happen when the Lord returns:

“But the heavens and the earth which now exist are kept in store by the same word, reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.”

3. It is now in **verses 10-13** that Peter describes our Lord's coming in greater detail...
 - a. An event that is called “the day of the Lord” - **2 Pe 3:10**
 - b. Now, there are some who believe that “**the coming of Christ**” and “**the day of the Lord**” are actually two separate events...
 - 1) That “**the coming of Christ**” is a secret coming in which He will “rapture” His saints
 - 2) And “**the day of the Lord**” is the final day of judgment which occurs much later
 - c. But Paul, like Peter, uses these expressions interchangeably...
 - 1) Having described “the coming of the Lord” and its implications for the righteous (**1 Th 4:13-18**), Paul calls it “the day of the Lord” as he discusses the timing of these events (**1 Th 5:1-4**)
 - 2) A similar use of these terms is found in **2 Th 2:1-2**
 - d. So as we turn to our text in **2 Pe 3:10-13**, we are considering what is true about the coming our Lord Jesus, as promised in **Ac 1:9-11**

[What does the apostle Peter, who was among those who heard the promise of the Lord's return as Jesus ascended into heaven, have to say about our Lord's coming?]

I. IT WILL BE “UNEXPECTED” (10a)

A. LIKE “A THIEF IN THE NIGHT”...

1. Paul used the same expression in **1 Th 5:1-3**
2. And so did Jesus, in His Mt. Olivet discourse - **Mt 24:42-44**
3. So the Lord's coming at the Last Day will be unexpected, with no warning

B. BUT NOT FOR FAITHFUL CHRISTIANS...!

1. The day of the Lord should not “overtake you as a thief” - **1 Th 5:4-6**

- a. Not because they know the “day or hour” of His coming, nor because of any revelation that pinpoints the time of His coming
- b. But because they heed the command to “watch”! - **1 Th 5:6; cf. Mk 13:32-37**
2. However, notice what Jesus said to those Christians who do NOT “watch” - **Re 3:1-3**
 - a. They must “remember”, “hold fast” and “repent”
 - b. Otherwise, the Lord will come upon them as a thief as well!

[So the first thing Peter tells us about the day of the Lord is that it will come unannounced, like “a thief in the night.” He also tells us...]

II. IT WILL BE “CATASTROPHIC” (10b, 11a, 12b)

A. “THE HEAVENS WILL PASS AWAY WITH A GREAT NOISE..” (10b)

1. While “*the heavens*” could refer to the atmosphere, I believe it more likely refers to the universe, including the stars (see below)
2. The heavens will “*pass away*”, or “disappear” (NIV, NEB), “vanish” (MOFFAT)
 - a. Consider **Mt 24:35; Re 20:11; 21:1**
 - b. This certainly suggests that Peter is describing an “annihilation” of the universe, and not simply a fiery purification of it

B. “THE ELEMENTS WILL MELT WITH FERVENT HEAT...” (10b, 11a, 12b)

1. The “*elements*” likely signifies the celestial bodies (sun, moon, stars)
2. According to Jewish belief, in the last day even the stars will be destroyed - cf. **Isa 34:4** (The New Testament Commentary, Peter and Jude, Kistemaker, p. 336)
3. The term “*melt*” {luo}, in **verse 10...**
 - a. Means “(lit. or fig.):--break (up), destroy, dissolve, (un-) loose, melt, put off”
 - b. It is translated “dissolved” in verses **11** and **12**
 - 1) “all these things will be dissolved”
 - 2). “the heavens will be dissolved being on fire”
4. The term “*melt*” {teko}, in **verse 12...**
 - a. Means “to liquefy”
 - b. As translated in The Emphasized New Testament (J. B. Rotherham): “...*the elements becoming intensely hot are to be melted*”

C. “THE EARTH AND THE WORKS THAT ARE IN IT WILL BE BURNED UP...” (10b)

1. Having described the destruction of the universe, attention is now given to the earth in particular
2. Some manuscripts have the phrase “*laid bare*” for “*burned up*”
3. This has led some to suppose that Peter is describing only a purification of the universe, not an annihilation of the present order
4. But as we have seen, both the immediate context (“pass away”, “melt”, “dissolve”, in **2 Pe 3**) and the remote context (“pass away”, “no place found for them”, **Re 20:11; 21:1**) speaks strongly for annihilation - cf. also **He 12:25-29**

[The “day of the Lord” will truly be a cataclysmic end to the earth and universe as we know it! Should this be cause for despair? Not at all, for Peter also tells us that...]

III. IT WILL “USHER IN A NEW ORDER” (13)

A. “A NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH IN WHICH RIGHTEOUSNESS DWELLS...”

1. This “new order” is described more fully by John in **Re 21:1-5**
2. It includes **“the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven”** for which...
 - a. Old Testament saints looked forward - **He 11:10, 13-16**
 - b. New Testament saints were said to seek - **He 13:14**
3. Indeed, this “new heavens and new earth” with its “heavenly city” is the ultimate destiny of the redeemed!

B. “ACCORDING TO HIS PROMISE...”

1. We look forward to this “new heavens and new earth” because of God’s promise
2. Which promise? The only promise made concerning such things prior to Peter and John’s is that found in **Isa 65:17-25; 66:22-24**
 - a. In which the same themes are discussed as those found in **Re 21-22**
 - b. But in language and figures that would have provided special comfort to the Jews of Isaiah’s day
3. If Peter is indeed alluding to the promises of God through Isaiah, there is an important implication...
 - a. Isaiah not only foretold events pertaining to the **“inauguration”** (the first coming) of the Messianic age (e.g., **Isa 2:2-4; 7:14; 9:6-7**)
 - b. Isaiah also foretold events pertaining to the **“culmination”** (the second coming) of the Messianic age (e.g., **Isa 65:17-25; 66:22-24**)
 - c. And some passages in Isaiah (e.g., **Isa 11:6-9**)...
 - 1) Which the premillennialist applies to a 1000 year reign on earth
 - 2) And some amillennialists apply to the current “Christian age”
...may in fact have reference to the “new heavens and new earth” of which Peter and John speak!

[In any case, we certainly have the promise of Peter and John of the “new heavens and new earth” as found in the New Testament. And without question an important implication of this promise which will be fulfilled in the day of the Lord is that...]

IV. IT SHOULD INSPIRE HOLY LIVING (11b, 12a)

A. WE OUGHT TO BE PEOPLE OF “HOLY CONDUCT AND GODLINESS”... (11b)

1. Everything we may acquire in this life will be “dissolved” (our wealth, our fame, our physical relationships)
2. The only thing that has “promise of the life to come” is **godliness - 1 Ti 4:8**
3. **Holy conduct** is able to “store up...a good foundation for the time to come” - **1 Ti 6:17-19**

B. WE OUGHT TO BE “LOOKING FOR AND HASTENING THE COMING OF THE

DAY OF GOD”... (12a)

1. If we “look for new heavens and a new earth” (v.13), we should certainly “look for...the coming of the day of God”!
2. Indeed, we should “hasten” the coming of that great day!
 - a. It may be that “hastening” means “earnestly desiring” the day of the Lord
 - b. But it can also mean in this passage “to speed its coming”
 - 1) Is it possible to shorten the time set for the coming of the Lord?
 - 2) If the delay is due to God’s longsuffering so that men can repent, what if they repent? Would there be reason to delay any longer?
 - c. Not only can we pray for the Lord to come (**1 Co 16:22**), but Peter says elsewhere that we may do something to speed His coming! - cf. **Ac 3:19-21**
 - a. “Repent therefore and be converted...”
 - b. “...that He may send Jesus Christ”

CONCLUSION

1. According to Peter, then, the “day of the Lord” will be...
 - a. A day that is unexpected
 - b. A day that will be cataclysmic
 - c. A day that will usher in a new order
 - d. A day for which we ought to look and hasten
2. Peter does not describe all the events that will occur on that day...
 - a. He says nothing about the resurrection, though that is clearly implied
 - b. He says little about the judgment per se, though it too is an important feature ...but what he says is adequate to force us to consider how we shall respond
3. How shall we respond to the words of Peter? I know of three possible ways...
 - a. We can mock them
 - b. We can ignore them, delaying obedience, and likely be found unprepared
 - c. We can humbly heed them, responding to God’s longsuffering through obedience to the gospel -- Just as there were three different reactions to the preaching of Paul - cf. **Ac 17:30-31**

Dear friend, how will **you** respond...?

Peter's Final Exhortations

2 Peter 3:14-18

INTRODUCTION

1. We come to the final section of this second epistle of Peter, a letter in which...
 - a. Peter has endeavored to “stir you up by way of reminder” - **2 Pe 1:13-15; 3:1-2**
 - b. Peter has exhorted those “who have obtained like precious faith”...
 - 1) To be diligent in abounding in spiritual growth - **2 Pe 1:5-11**
 - 2) To heed the prophetic word made more sure - **2 Pe 1:16-21**
 - 2) To beware of false teachers that will lead many astray - **2 Pe 2:1-22**
 - 3) To not be deterred by scoffers of the Lord's coming - **2 Pe 3:3-9**
 - 4) To live holy lives in view of the coming Day of the Lord - **2 Pe 3:10-13**
2. As Peter draws his epistle to a close, it is evident that he is filled with love toward his brethren...
 - a. He calls them “beloved” in **2 Pe 3:1,8**
 - b. And now in our text, he uses this “term of endearment” twice - **2 Pe 3:14,17**
3. With such love in his heart, Peter pens his final words...
 - a. He knows that he will soon die - **2 Pe 1:14**
 - b. As far as we know, he wrote no other epistle
4. This ought to give special significance to the “**final exhortations**” that we find in our text...
 - a. Just as the final words of any dying man are significant, in that they reveal what is of greatest concern to that person
 - b. What are the concerns of this aged apostle, who dearly loves his brethren?

[In **verse 14**, we find first of all his exhortation to...]

I. BE DILIGENT TO BE FOUND IN PEACE, WITHOUT SPOT AND BLAMELESS

A. THIS IS YET ANOTHER CALL TO “DILIGENCE”...

1. Found twice before - cf. **2 Pe 1:5,10**
2. The word means “earnestness, zeal, sometimes with haste”
3. There it was applied to growing spiritually

B. DILIGENCE IN THIS TEXT PERTAINS TO LORD'S COMING...

1. How will the Lord find us when He comes?
2. Will he find us to be people of faith? -cf. **Lk 18:8**

C. PETER DESIRES THAT THE LORD FIND US “IN PEACE, WITHOUT SPOT AND BLAMELESS”...

1. “in peace” can refer to both...
 - a. Our relationship with God - **Ro 5:1**

- b. Our relationship with man - **1 Pe 3:11-12**
 - Focusing on our peace with God will help us have peace with man - **Pr 16:7**
- 2. To be found by Jesus as “without spot and blameless”? How can that be?
 - a. Only through the sacrificial love of Jesus Christ - **Ep 5:25-27**
 - b. Who redeems us from sin through His precious blood, as “of a lamb without blemish and without spot” - **1 Pe 1:18-19**
 - c. If we continue to walk in the light, we continue to enjoy that precious blood - **2 Jn 1:7**

D. DILIGENCE IN SUCH THINGS WILL BE DETERMINED BY WHERE WE SET OUR AIM...

- 1. “...looking forward to these things, be diligent...”
- 2. It is only as we “look forward” can we hope to prepare for what is to come - cf. **1 Pe 1:13**
- 3. As we look for the grace that is to come, especially in reference to the new heavens and a new earth (**2 Pe 3:13**), we will find the motivation to “be diligent”

[Are you looking forward to the new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells? If not, you will not be diligent to be found ready when the Lord comes. If you have allowed the lure of the world to distract your aim you because of the delay of our Lord’s coming, then Peter’s exhortation in **verse 15** speaks to you...]

II. REMEMBER, THE LONG-SUFFERING OF THE LORD IS SALVATION

A. DELAY OF THE LORD’S COMING IS NOT SLACKNESS...

- 1. For time is irrelevant to God - **2 Pe 3:8**
- 2. Rather, the Lord is willing to suffer long so that people might repent - **2 Pe 3:9**

B. GOD’S LONG-SUFFERING SHOULD BE SEEN AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO REPENT...

- 1. Every day, year, or century that our Lord does not return, should be thought of as “the day of salvation” - cf. **2 Co 6:1-2**
 - a. The day for souls to obey Christ
 - b. The day for erring Christians to return to their Lord
- 2. Like Peter, Paul wrote of God’s longsuffering and its motivation to salvation - **Ro 2:4**

[Peter himself certainly took advantage of God’s longsuffering to repent, not only when he denied Jesus, but also when he played the hypocrite and had to be rebuked by Paul (**Ga 2:11-21**). Peter’s repentance in the latter incident is evident by his description of Paul (“**our beloved brother Paul**”). He clearly held no animosity toward Paul for what may have occurred at Antioch. Shall we not likewise take advantage of God’s longsuffering to “work out our salvation with fear and trembling”? As we do so, let’s be careful to heed the exhortation implied in **verse 16...**]

III. DON’T TWIST THE SCRIPTURES TO YOUR OWN DESTRUCTION

A. THE SCRIPTURES CAN BE A SOURCE OF MUCH GOOD...

- 1. They can “save your souls” - **Ja 1:21**
- 2. For they are given by inspiration of God - **2 Ti 3:16-17**

2. Because of this, they are “living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword”
- **He 4:12**

B. BUT THEY CAN ALSO BE ABUSED TO MUCH HARM...

1. Just as a sword can be misused to the harm of the one wielding it
2. Twisted, the Scriptures can even lead one “to their own destruction”!
3. Those most susceptible to misusing the Word of God are...
 - a. The “**untaught**”
 - 1) Armed with a little knowledge, they believe they are ready to “do battle”
 - 2) But “a little knowledge is a dangerous thing”
 - 3) Unless one has studied the context (both immediate and remote) of a passage, it is so easy to misapply it
 - b. The “**unstable**”
 - 1) This would be the “babe” in Christ, the immature
 - 2) Who seeks to “run” with the Scriptures before they have even learned to “walk”, often “stumbling” as a result
4. Thus the need to heed not only Peter’s warning, but Paul’s admonition in **2 Ti 2:14-18**, where he gives the example of Hymenaeus and Philetus

[With such warnings, perhaps we may better appreciate James’ admonition: “**...receive with meekness the implanted word.**” (**Ja 1:21**)

In passing, it is interesting to note that Peter places Paul’s writings on par with “the rest of the Scriptures”, implying that Paul’s writings are to be considered as much a part of the canon as the Old Testament scriptures.

Finally, Peter concludes his epistle with two exhortations that summarize the content of his entire epistle...]

IV. SUMMARY EXHORTATIONS

A. BEWARE LEST YOU FALL, BEING LED AWAY BY ERROR...

1. This verse (**17**) summarizes all that Peter was doing in chapters two and three
2. Peter’s concern is in view of the very real danger of apostasy
 - a. He has already described those:
 - 1) Who were guilty of “denying the Lord who bought them” - **2 Pe 2:1**
 - 2) Who “have forsaken the right way and gone astray” - **2 Pe 2:15**
 - 3) Who having “escaped the pollutions of the world” are “again entangled in them and overcome” - **2 Pe 2:20**
 - b. He has just described those:
 - 1) Being “untaught and unstable...”
 - 2) “...twist the scriptures to their own destruction” - **2 Pe 3:16**
3. Brethren, the danger of apostasy is very real, and so Peter says “beware lest you also fall”!

B. GROW IN THE GRACE AND KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST...

1. This verse (**18**) summarizes the main points of chapter one

2. In which Peter had described:
 - a. Blessings which come by the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ - **2 Pe 1:1-4**
 - b. How one grows in the knowledge of Jesus Christ - **2 Pe 1:5-11**
 - c. The need for frequent reminder, and to heed the testimony of apostolic testimony and the prophetic word - **2 Pe 1:12-21**
3. In this verse, then, is the key to avoiding apostasy: **“Grow!”**
 - a. **Grow in the grace of Jesus Christ**, by appreciating and appropriating all of God’s unmerited favor
 - b. **Grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ** as defined by Peter in chapter one, developing those Christ-like qualities he listed

CONCLUSION

1. Peter closes his second epistle with a simple yet heartfelt expression of praise:

“To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen”

2. It was not long after Peter penned these words that he “put off his tent” (**2 Pe 1:14**), and joined that great multitude described by his fellow apostle John...

“After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Salvation [belongs] to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!’” (Re 7:9-10)

3. Brethren, don’t we desire to join that throng one day? If so, then let us heed these final words of Peter to his beloved brethren...
 - a. Be diligent to be found in peace, without spot and blameless
 - b. Remember, the longsuffering of the Lord is salvation
 - c. Don’t twist the Scriptures to your own destruction
 - d. Beware lest you fall, being led away by error
 - e. Grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ

Are you using the longsuffering of the Lord to apply all diligence in growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord? Have you even begun? If not, then heed the words of Peter in his first gospel sermon...
- cf. **Ac 2:36-39**