



NOON DAY BIBLE STUDY

1 & 2 PETER

Living with Discernment in the End Times

LESSONS 1-6

Information Used for Study Only!

PRINTED SCRIPTURE NISB –The New International Version (NIV) – Feel free to use the translation of your choice.

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LIVING WITH DISCERNMENT IN THE END TIMES

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Resources/Used for Study Only:

- 1. Kay Arthur, *Living with Discernment in the End Times*, Harvest House Publisher, Eugene, Oregon, @1996
- 2. Chuck Swindoll, *Great Lives from God’s Word series*, Insight for Living Ministries, @1997
- 3. The Life Application Study Bible, *New International Version*, Tyndale House Publishers, 1988

STANDING FIRM IN DIFFICULT TIMES

1 PETER

INTRODUCTION

Who wrote the book?

The first word of this epistle, *Peter*, identifies the author, who called himself “an apostle of Jesus Christ” ([1 Peter 1:1](#)). He wrote this letter to a group of Christians scattered throughout the northern areas of Asia Minor, where he may have previously preached the gospel.

Peter wrote to a group of people that probably included both Jews and Gentiles. The apostle addressed the letter’s recipients as “aliens” (1:1), a word indicating that Peter was speaking not just to Jews or just to Gentiles but to Christians who were living their lives in such a way that they would have stood out as aliens among the surrounding culture.

Where are we?

In this letter, Peter spoke much about persecution, which anticipated the persecution he and other Christians would endure in the final years of Nero’s reign. At the time he wrote, Peter had not yet been arrested, an event that would lead to his martyrdom around AD 66–68. [First Peter 5:13](#) indicates that Peter sent greetings from the local church—calling it “Babylon”—but it’s most likely that the apostle was writing in a common metaphor there. He used the name of the ancient Mesopotamian city as a stand-in for Rome, the modern city that, like Babylon, gave itself over to idol worship and false gods. While the fact is not recorded in the Bible, Peter has long been thought to have spent his final years serving the church in Rome. Based on the numerous references to suffering and persecution in this letter, Peter likely wrote in AD 64, just as the persecution of Christians under Nero was ramping up.

Why is First Peter so important?

First Peter focuses on the importance of believers bearing up under unjust suffering yet continuing to live well ([1 Peter 2:20](#)). In this way, 1 Peter might be called the Job of the New Testament, providing encouragement for the true believer to continue on in the way that Jesus has laid out for all His followers. The endurance Peter called these believers to is similar to Job’s, a man who suffered despite his righteousness. Peter maintained that this was the kind of true perseverance that God expects from His people.

What's the big idea?

Living in close proximity to Jesus Christ for more than three years had provided the apostle Peter the best possible example of what it looked like to live in holiness amid a hostile world. More than any other man who walked the earth, Jesus modeled that lifestyle. Peter therefore pointed his readers in the best possible direction, to Jesus Himself. The apostle called Christians to “sanctify Christ as Lord” in their hearts, that believers might live and act as Jesus desires during their short time here on earth ([1 Peter 3:14–18](#)). This would include submission to authority—even unjust authority—in the government, in the home, and in the workplace. Jesus becomes the focal point for ordering one’s life in the midst of trials and tribulations. By rooting their perseverance in the person and work of Christ, believers can always cling to hope in the midst of suffering.

How do I apply this?

Unjust or unforeseen suffering is one of the great problems that grips the hearts of people today. We struggle with frustration, anger, and uncertainty when trials strange and unexpected land on our doorsteps. Too often in those most difficult moments of our lives, confusion reigns while contentment wanes; questions arise while prayer subsides.

How do you react when suffering comes? Many crumbles at the mere thought of another pain or trial. Others rise to the occasion. Most of us are probably somewhere in between. Peter’s encouragement to his Christian readers is one of perseverance in faith. It isn’t enough for us to simply get up every morning and trudge through each day; neither is it advisable to paste a smile on our faces and ignore troubles. Instead, the lesson of 1 Peter is to push through the troubles, recognizing their temporary presence in our lives while walking in holiness and hope as people of faith.

So, press on! It is in the darkest times that our collective light shines brightest.

-Chuck Swindoll

Stand Firm in His Grace

1 PETER 1

New International Version

1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,

To God's elect, exiles scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, 2 who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood:

Grace and peace be yours in abundance.

Praise to God for a Living Hope

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, 5 who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. 7 These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. 8 Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, 9 for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

10 Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, 11 trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that would follow. 12 It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.

Be Holy

13 Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming. 14 As obedient children do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. 15 But just as he

who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; 16 for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.”[a]

17 Since you call on a Father who judges each person’s work impartially, live out your time as foreigners here in reverent fear. 18 For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. 20 He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. 21 Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.

22 Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart.[b] 23 For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. 24 For,

“All people are like grass,
 and all their glory is like the flowers of the field;
 the grass withers and the flowers fall,
 25 but the word of the Lord endures forever.”[c]

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

These are difficult times. Christians are being restricted more and more in how they can express their beliefs. Morality has plummeted to new lows. How can believers resist all these influences that tend to woo us away from following the example of Christ? How can we stand when so many are falling? Peter gives us the answers.

In 1 Peter we have recorded what Peter, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, wrote to the believers who had been scattered due to the intense persecution of their day. These were difficult days for them, and it looked as if was going to get worse. Peter writes to encourage the believers to stand firm during these difficult times.

His message is relevant for us today. We too are facing some difficult situations in our own lives. We need to be encouraged. In 1 Peter we will receive that exhortation as well as some practical instructions on standing firm during difficult times. You may be surprised to discover what Peter uses to motivate believers to “hang in there.”

Once you understand and apply the principles given in this book, beloved of God, you will be able to stand firm in difficult times. ***

Acting Like Saints

1 PETER 2

New International Version

1 Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. 2 Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, 3 now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

The Living Stone and a Chosen People

4 As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him— 5 you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house[a] to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6 For in Scripture it says:

“See, I lay a stone in Zion,
 a chosen and precious cornerstone,
 and the one who trusts in him
 will never be put to shame.”[b]

7 Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe,
 “The stone the builders rejected
 has become the cornerstone,”[c]

8 and,
 “A stone that causes people to stumble
 and a rock that makes them fall.”[d]

They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for.

9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Living Godly Lives in a Pagan Society

11 Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. 12 Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

13 Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human authority: whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority, 14 or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. 15 For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people. 16 Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as God's slaves. 17 Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honor the emperor.

18 Slaves, in reverent fear of God submit yourselves to your masters, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh. 19 For it is commendable if someone bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because they are conscious of God. 20 But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. 21 To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

22 "He committed no sin,
and no deceit was found in his mouth." [e]

23 When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. 24 "He himself bore our sins" in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; "by his wounds you have been healed." 25 For "you were like sheep going astray," [f] but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

In chapter 2, Peter discusses two new concepts: submission and doing what is right. He also gives us several portraits of Jesus – a living stone, the cornerstone, and example, a suffering Savior, the Shepherd and Guardian of our souls.

The study this week has caused us to reflect on what God has done for us through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. This gives us the opportunity to die to sin, to live to righteousness, and to respond in a more Christlike way to those who treat us harshly or cause us to suffer unjustly.

We are indeed a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, and a people for God's own possession. We no longer live in darkness. We must continually choose to keep entrusting ourselves to Him who judges righteously as we follow the example that has been set before us. We can act like saints – that is who we are!

QUESTIONS:

1. What kind of “spiritual sacrifices” do believers offer to God?
2. It's been said that Christian living involves a negative (separation from) and a positive (separation to or desiring for). How are these positives & negatives related to practical living?
3. How could Christ cause someone to stumble?
4. What makes it possible for us to obey God's commands, particularly his command to love one another?
5. How does obeying the command to love one another enhance witness to non-believers?

Loving Life and Seeing Good Days

1 PETER 3

New International Version

1 Wives, in the same way submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, 2 when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. 3 Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes. 4 Rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. 5 For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to adorn themselves. They submitted themselves to their own husbands, 6 like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her lord. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear.

7 Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

Suffering for Doing Good

8 Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. 9 Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. 10 For,

“Whoever would love life

and see good days

must keep their tongue from evil

and their lips from deceitful speech.

11 They must turn from evil and do good;

they must seek peace and pursue it.

12 For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous

and his ears are attentive to their prayer,

but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”[a]

13 Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? 14 But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. “Do not fear their threats[b]; do not be frightened.”[c] 15 But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give

an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, 16 keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. 17 For it is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. 18 For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit. 19 After being made alive,[d] he went and made proclamation to the imprisoned spirits— 20 to those who were disobedient long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, 21 and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience toward God.[e] It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 22 who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

My friend, no matter how impossible your situation seems, no matter how bad the relationship is, follow in His steps. Submit and do what is right, even if you know you will suffer for it. God will give you whatever you need to endure. Keep constantly, continually, consistently entrusting yourself and your situation to Him, remembering that at times it will look like there is no justice in what is going on, no truth in what is being said, or no life left in the situation. But remember that God, the righteous Judge, has a final word, and He is able to bring life out of death, to His praise and glory and honor.

You have been called for this purpose. You have been encouraged, even commanded by Peter to follow in the steps of Jesus. Now you know the steps. You can no longer return to the former lusts of your ignorance. Now you must follow Him or walk in disobedience to the Word. When you put your foot in His footprint, then and only then will you love life and see good days regardless of what others do to you!

QUESTIONS:

1. Should we pay more attention to what people do? Or what people say? Why?
2. How does our culture encourage us to enhance our outward rather than our inward appearance? How can the church help?
3. What about our lives should attract people to Christ?
4. When is it most difficult to demonstrate a loving attitude toward others?
5. What should a wife do if her husband asks her to do something illegal? What if he hits her? Or forbids her to attend church?
6. How might Peter's words affect how decisions get made in your home?

No Turning Back

1 PETER 4

New International Version

1 Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because whoever suffers in the body is done with sin. 2 As a result, they do not live the rest of their earthly lives for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God. 3 For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do—living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry. 4 They are surprised that you do not join them in their reckless, wild living, and they heap abuse on you. 5 But they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. 6 For this is the reason the gospel was preached even to those who are now dead, so that they might be judged according to human standards in regard to the body, but live according to God in regard to the spirit.

7 The end of all things is near. Therefore be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray. 8 Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. 9 Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. 10 Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. 11 If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

Suffering for Being a Christian

12 Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. 13 But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. 14 If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. 15 If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. 16 However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name. 17 For it is time for judgment to begin with God's household; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? 18 And,

“If it is hard for the righteous to be saved,

what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?”[a]

19 So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good. ***

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

We are motivated to patiently endure when we gaze at the portrait of grace. However, the persistent calling back to a former lifestyle is distracting at times. Maybe that's why Peter, at this point in the letter, reminds us of the will and judgment of God.

Peter reminds us that even in the light of all that God has done for us, it is His will for us, on occasion, to suffer for doing what is right rather than avoiding suffering by doing what is called right by the standards of men. It is the will of God for our lifestyles to be according to His plan rather than the pleasurable schemes of men.

And even though He bore our sins in His own body on the cross, in the future we will stand before Him while He impartially judges our works accomplished on planet Earth. He is ready to judge righteousness. He begins with us, the household of God.

What a balance – the grace of God and the judgment of God. You are the recipient of the unmerited favor of God. Live in the light of it because you are accountable. Keep your eyes on the portrait of His grace!

QUESTIONS:

1. Why is it better to suffer for doing good than for doing wrong? Isn't it all suffering?
2. What do you think is the purpose of the gifts God gives us?
3. What usually motivates you to serve? What keeps you from serving?
4. How do you cope when you serve and no one notices or seems to appreciate it?
5. What blessings have you received from serving others?

The Blessing of Suffering

1 PETER 5

New International Version

1 To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ's sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed: 2 Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; 3 not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. 4 And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

5 In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because,

“God opposes the proud

but shows favor to the humble.”[a]

6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. 7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

8 Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. 9 Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

10 And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.

11 To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.

Final Greetings

12 With the help of Silas,[b] whom I regard as a faithful brother, I have written to you briefly, encouraging you and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it.

13 She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you her greetings, and so does my son Mark. 14 Greet one another with a kiss of love.

Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

It was once said that suffering is the school that God sends His children through so that He might teach them how to trust Him.

Suffering is inevitable for the believer. None is exempt. Suffering crosses all social financial, physical, cultural, and political strata. The popular suffer and the prominent suffer. The prosperous suffer and the powerful suffer. The poor suffer and even the pious suffer. Suffering is impartial, unbiased. It has no conscience. It goes where it desires, it goes where it is sent. It goes where it is unwelcome, it goes where it is unwanted. Suffering has no timing. Sometimes its brief, sometimes it lingers. Sometimes it just stays ... and stays... and stays. Suffering is certain ... but God has the final word!

QUESTIONS:

1. In practical terms, how can you trust God through difficult circumstances?
2. Describe someone you respect as a leader. How has that person been a good example?
3. What do you think are the responsibilities of church leaders?
4. Have you seen the fruits of humility among believers in your church or community? Or have you seen the “fruits” of lack of humility?
5. Why is it difficult to be humble?
6. Think of a person in your life who can help you be accountable (or who you help hold accountable). How do you best help each other?
7. Why is pride so strong a temptation for those in leadership?
8. What does your life have to do with the glory of God?

KEPT SAFE BY THE TRUTH 2 PETER

INTRODUCTION

Who wrote the book?

Peter introduced himself at the beginning of the letter as “a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ,” and he addressed the letter “to those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours” ([2 Peter 1:1](#)). Only later does it become apparent that Peter was writing to the same group of believers who had received his first letter. In [2 Peter 3:1](#), the author reflected that this is “the second letter I am writing to you.”

Where are we?

Peter wrote this letter from Rome soon after he wrote 1 Peter in AD 64–66. So what would have prompted another letter to the same group so soon after the first? From the contents of the letter, it appears that Peter had received reports of false teachers in and among the churches in Asia Minor. The apostle warned them about the insidious presence of those who spread heresies among the people ([2 Peter 2:1](#)), marking such difficulties as a sign of the last days (3:3). Peter wanted to encourage his people to stand firm and to instruct them on how best to do that.

Why is Second Peter so important?

The churches of Asia Minor were not just struggling with the persecution and suffering addressed in Peter’s first letter; they also had strife and dissension within their ranks. In an effort to stem the tide of heresy and false teaching among the Christians, Peter emphasized the importance of learning and clinging to the proper knowledge of God. In fact, this concept was so important to him that the word *knowledge* appears—in one form or another—some fifteen times in the span of this short, three-chapter letter.

What's the big idea?

Peter’s theme in his second letter is a simple one: pursue spiritual maturity through the Word of God as a remedy for false teaching and a right response to heretics in light of Christ’s promised second coming ([2 Peter 1:3, 16](#)). When false teachers begin to whisper their sweet words into the ears of immature Christians, the body of Christ begins to break apart, to lose what makes it distinctive in the first place—faith in the unique person and work of Jesus Christ. Peter repeatedly points to the Word of God as the primary means of growth for the Christian (1:4, 19–21; 3:1–2, 14–16).

Peter encouraged his readers to apply themselves to acquiring the true knowledge of God and living out the life of faith with “all diligence,” so that they may “be found by [Jesus] in peace, spotless and blameless” (1:5; 3:14). And if believers did not follow his advice, they would be giving their Christian community over to the heretics, people who look to “exploit . . . with false words” (2:3).

How do I apply this?

As with the recipients of Peter’s letter, we all go through difficult times. Those trials seem to hit us even harder when the source of the struggles comes from somewhere or someone close to us. We know intuitively this is true in our personal lives: a rift in a marriage, an unwed daughter’s unexpected pregnancy, or an abusive relationship with a relative. But it holds true within the church as well.

Believers can create dissension in multiple ways, particularly in the areas of relationships and theology. To guard against that kind of discord—both in our families and our churches—God’s people need to know who He is. Our knowledge of God through His Word is the first line of defense against the conflicts that threaten to tear us apart. As Peter wrote: “Be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men . . . but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” ([2 Peter 3:17–18](#)).

With that in mind, what means are you taking to grow in your faith? Let’s take the time to guard our minds with the proper knowledge of God so that we may not drift off from the path that God has laid out for us. - *Chuck Swindoll*

Living by Knowing the Truth

2 PETER 1

New International Version

1 Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ,

To those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours:

2 Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

Confirming One's Calling and Election

3 His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. 4 Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

5 For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; 6 and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; 7 and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. 8 For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 But whoever does not have them is nearsighted and blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their past sins.

10 Therefore, my brothers and sisters,[a] make every effort to confirm your calling and election. For if you do these things, you will never stumble, 11 and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Prophecy of Scripture

12 So I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are firmly established in the truth you now have. 13 I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body, 14 because I know that I will soon put it aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. 15 And I will make every effort to see that after my departure you will always be able to remember these things.

16 For we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. 17 He received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic

Glory, saying, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”[b] 18 We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.

19 We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. 20 Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation of things. 21 For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

Peter wants his readers to remember two things: First, he wants them to “remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets.” Second, he wants them to “remember the commandment of the Lord ... spoken by your apostles.” These two phrases remind me of the Old and New Testaments. He wants them to remember the Word of God. I am sure you have already seen the problem Peter is addressing chapter 2. We will learn more about the false teachers in the next few weeks, but for now you have already seen the danger Peter is concerned about. The danger is just as real today.

What is your security? In a world full of conflicting claims, how will you know the truth from error? With so many people claiming to speak for God, how do you know who is right? Friend, you need to become intimately acquainted with the “words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets” and the “commandment of the Lord.” You need to connect to the one thing that is strong enough to keep you from falling. The safety line that will hold you in place is the Word of God – both the Old and New Testaments. The Word is strong enough to hold you in place. You can trust it with your very life. It is eternal, life changing, and absolutely true. Stay connected to the truth.

We know this can seem like a daunting task. This is why we sponsor Noon day bible study. This is why we study the Bible together. These are great tools to keep you in the Word, learning at your own pace. You are doing great. Keep it up.

QUESTIONS:

1. What are we able to partake of if we escape the corruption of the world?
2. What things are we to add to faith, and what things will God multiply?
3. What rewards are there for the one who diligently adds the above qualities to his life?
4. What is the result of not adding these things?

Spotting False Teachers

2 PETER 2

New International Version

1 But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves. 2 Many will follow their depraved conduct and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. 3 In their greed these teachers will exploit you with fabricated stories. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping.

4 For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell,[a] putting them in chains of darkness[b] to be held for judgment; 5 if he did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others; 6 if he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by burning them to ashes, and made them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; 7 and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by the depraved conduct of the lawless 8 (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard)— 9 if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials and to hold the unrighteous for punishment on the day of judgment. 10 This is especially true of those who follow the corrupt desire of the flesh[c] and despise authority.

Bold and arrogant, they are not afraid to heap abuse on celestial beings; 11 yet even angels, although they are stronger and more powerful, do not heap abuse on such beings when bringing judgment on them from[d] the Lord. 12 But these people blaspheme in matters they do not understand. They are like unreasoning animals, creatures of instinct, born only to be caught and destroyed, and like animals they too will perish.

13 They will be paid back with harm for the harm they have done. Their idea of pleasure is to carouse in broad daylight. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their pleasures while they feast with you.[e] 14 With eyes full of adultery, they never stop sinning; they seduce the unstable; they are experts in greed—an accursed brood! 15 They have left the straight way and wandered off to follow the way of Balaam son of Bezer,[f] who loved the wages of wickedness. 16 But he was rebuked for his wrongdoing by a donkey—an animal without speech—who spoke with a human voice and restrained the prophet's madness.

17 These people are springs without water and mists driven by a storm. Blackest darkness is reserved for them. 18 For they mouth empty, boastful words and, by appealing to the

lustful desires of the flesh, they entice people who are just escaping from those who live in error. 19 They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity—for “people are slaves to whatever has mastered them.” 20 If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and are overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning. 21 It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them. 22 Of them the proverbs are true: “A dog returns to its vomit,”[g] and, “A sow that is washed returns to her wallowing in the mud.”

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

Peter calls them false teachers. They slip into the church and present another gospel. They claim to have a special knowledge. They have a new and improved safety line. Theirs will supposedly hold me better than ever. But will it? Friend, do not untie yourself from the Word of God; what they are offering will not hold. You will see what we mean this week.

These teachers had a knowledge of God and even fled from or escaped the defilements of the world. The phrase “escaped the defilements” indicates they cleaned up their act. It doesn’t necessarily mean they were born again. In verse 22 Peter uses the term “dog” or “sow” to describe their state. Both of these animals were unclean to the Jewish people. Did you notice neither animal was changed? Both came back to doing what they would normally do.

The picture of the Christian life is one of being born again – old things have passed away; all things have become new. They were never born again, they were just washed on the outside.

Peter uses the term “false words” to describe the message of the false teachers. The Greek word translated “false” is *plastos*. It is the root of our English word “plastic.” It shape their words to fit the occasion. They sound smooth and reasonable. The danger is great. If I don’t know what the words mean, how can I know the truth?

Friend, please be careful. Satan hates you and has a horrible plan for your life. Know the truth; know the Word of God. We encourage you to stay in Bible Study – don’t stop!

QUESTION:

1. When does Peter want his readers to remember these things? (12)
2. What did Jesus foretell about Peter's death? (13-15, John 21:18-19)
3. What example did Peter give that indicates he was not following cunningly devised fables, but was an eyewitness of Christ? (16-18)

Beware of Those Who Mock God's Promise and His Judgment

2 PETER 3

New International Version

1 Dear friends, this is now my second letter to you. I have written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking. 2 I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Savior through your apostles.

3 Above all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. 4 They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation." 5 But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens came into being and the earth was formed out of water and by water. 6 By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. 7 By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.

8 But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. 9 The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare.[a]

11 Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives 12 as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming.[b] That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. 13 But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells.

14 So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him. 15 Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. 16 He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.

17 Therefore, dear friends, since you have been forewarned, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of the lawless and fall from your secure position. 18 But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

Are you waiting with expectancy for the coming day of the Lord? Do you really expect Him back, or in reality are you more like the mockers who did not believe His promise that He would return? Practically speaking, do you live like you believe in the day of the Lord?

Our Lord's return and the certainty that we will be like Him when we see Him should ever be on our heart and mind so that rather than being entangled with the affairs of this life, we are anxiously awaiting His coming.

And of course, because we live for God and are ambassadors of Christ who have been given the ministry of reconciliation, getting the gospel to the lost should always be foremost on your heart. Without Him, people will perish.

We must be merciful with those who doubt, helping them in their weakness. And we must faithfully warn those who we know are headed for eternal damnation seeking to snatch them from the fire. They must know that without Jesus Christ and the righteousness He gives, they will surely perish.

And those who reek with the pollution of the world are not to be scorned or despised but treated with mercy. Yes, we must be careful that we despise their sin so that in rescuing them we are not tempted; nevertheless, they need mercy and rescuing, and this we must do, Beloved, in the fear of the Lord. There is no other to whom belongs eternal glory, majesty, dominion, and authority!

He is coming. How then should you act? Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

May we live accordingly so that when we see Him, we will be blameless and filled with joy.

QUESTIONS:

1. What are we to stir up?
2. How did Peter in this chapter show the unity of the Old Testament with the New Testament?
3. Who will come in the last days? (3)

