

WATCH OUT ... STAY ON TRACK ... KEEP ON GROWING

A Devotional Commentary on the Book of 2 Peter

by Paul G. Apple, March 2002

DILIGENT GROWTH IN THE TRUE KNOWLEDGE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST:

- PROTECTS US AGAINST THE DESTRUCTIVE
HERESIES OF FALSE TEACHERS
- AND
- PREPARES US TO PERSEVERE IN GODLINESS AS
WE AWAIT HIS PROMISED RETURN

For each section:

- Thesis statement ... to focus on the big idea
- Analytical outline ... to guide the understanding
- Devotional questions ... to encourage life application
- Representative quotations ... to stimulate deeper insight

2 Peter 1:3 *"seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence."*

2 Peter 3:18 *"but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."*

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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BACKGROUND OF THE BOOK OF 2 Peter

Malick: Message Statement -- Argument of the Book:

PETER WRITES TO EXHORT HIS READERS NOT TO BE INFLUENCED BY THE COMING FALSE TEACHERS WHO DENY THAT THE LORD WILL RETURN TO JUDGE THOSE WHO DO EVIL BUT TO GROW IN GOD'S PROVISION AND THE APOSTOLIC TRUTH OF JESUS CHRIST'S FUTURE COMING

PURPOSES:

- A. Peter writes because his time is short and he knows that God's people are facing many dangers (1:13-14; 2:1-3)
- B. Peter writes to provide a reminder of the basis in Christian faith (1:12-13,16-21) and to instruct future generations of believers in the faith (1:15) by affirming its apostolic tradition
- C. Peter writes to warn his readers about the coming of false teachers (2:1-22) who deny the soon return of the Lord (3:3-4) and live immoral and greedy lives

Gundry:

Theme: the true knowledge of Christian belief versus false teachers and their denial of the Parousia

INTRODUCTION: greeting (1:1-2)

I. THE TRUE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRISTIAN BELIEF (1:3-21)

- A. The moral undergirding of Christian belief with correct conduct (1:3-11)
- B. The historical reliability of Christian belief, supported by eyewitness testimony (particularly of the transfiguration) and fulfilled prophecy (1:12-21)

II. FALSE TEACHERS (2:1-22)

- A. Their coming appearance in the Church (2:1-3)
- B. Their future judgment (2:4-10a)
- C. Their immoral ways (2:10b-22)

III. THE PAROUSIA AND FINAL DISSOLUTION (3:1-18a)

- A. Its certainty in spite of delay and denials by false teachers (3:1-10)
- B. Its call to godliness (3:11-18a)

CONCLUSION: doxology (3:18b)

Swindoll:

The three themes of 2 Peter fit together like the feathers, shaft, and point of an arrow. The feathers are made up of *warnings*: "Watch out, beware"; *reminders*: "Remember, don't forget"; and *promises*: "It will come to pass, count on this." These feathers, however, amount to nothing more than spiritual-sounding fluff if we don't act on them. So label the main shaft *diligence*. Peter will tell us more than once that if diligence is applied it will lead to the arrow's point -- *hope*!

Purpose: To warn against false teaching, moral compromise, and doctrinal error in the last days.

Date: A.D. 66-67

Key Words: Know, Diligence, Remember / Remind, Corruption

Tone: Urgency, Intensity

INTRODUCTION (1:1-3)

I. MORAL CORRUPTION (Chap. 1)

Answers Question: How can I escape defilement?
Warning: Be Pure! (v. 4)
Reminder: verses 12-13
Promise: "You will never stumble" (v. 10)
Perspective: Looking within

II. DOCTRINAL COMPROMISE (Chap. 2)

Answers Question: What shall I expect from "prophets"?
Warning: Be Aware! (vv. 1-3)
Reminder: Verses 21-22
Promise: "God will rescue you" (v. 9)
Perspective: Looking back

III. PROPHETIC CONCERN (Chap. 3)

Answers Question: Where will all this end?
Warning: Be Strong! (v. 14)
Reminder: Verses 1-2
Promise: "We look for new hope" (v. 13)
Perspective: Looking ahead

CONCLUSION (3:18)

Stedman: "This letter was very likely written from the same place as the first letter, when Peter was a prisoner, perhaps of Nero of Rome. At least, it is evident that he is in great danger, because in this letter he says that he feels the time is drawing near when he is to put off his body -- his tent, his habitation -- to go and be with the Lord. And he says the Lord himself showed him this, as recorded for us at the close of the Gospel of John. The Lord Jesus had said to Peter that there would come a time when men would bind his hands and lead him where he did not desire to go.

Peter understood this to mean that he was to suffer and die as our Lord died, on a cross. And tradition tells us that Peter was indeed crucified, that he was so humbled by the fact that he was counted worthy to die the same kind of a death that the Lord Jesus did, that he begged his captors to crucify him upside down."

Jones: "We have here a letter written in the early days of the Christian church to a number of Christian people. They were scattered abroad, we gather from the first Epistle, throughout a considerable part of the then civilized and known world. It is a letter written to people who were confronted by difficulties and by problems. The first Epistle, in the same way exactly as this Epistle, makes it quite clear that the object that the Apostle had in mind when he wrote both these letters was to comfort and to encourage and to strengthen these people. They faced difficulties, both from without and within, for their world, as one is never tired of pointing out, was a world very similar to ours..."

In particular, questions were being raised as to the value of the promises of God. An essential part of the preaching of the Gospel, from the very beginning, was the message of the second coming of our Lord and of the various things that would accompany it. All those first preachers preached a Gospel of judgment. You remember how often we are told in the Gospels and the book of the Acts of the Apostles that their message in the first instance was that men and women should flee from the wrath to come. The Gospel was always presented in terms of judgment. It was put in that historical form, it was emphasized and stressed that this self-same Jesus who had been crucified and buried, and who had risen again, would likewise come again in judgment, and that when He came He would judge the world, and that therefore all should make certain of being found in a right relationship to Him. But these false teachers and others had crept into the churches and they were raising questions and queries."

Pounds:

"2 Peter: True Knowledge
How Then Should We Live?"

Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you. . ." (1:1; 3:1).

AUTHOR: The Apostle Peter is the stated author of the Second Epistle of Peter. However, it should be kept in mind that there is almost no external evidence to prove that this epistle was written by Peter. No direct quotation from it can be found in the patristic literature prior to the beginning of the third century. Eusebius, in the fourth century classes it among the doubtful books rather than among those that were accepted as of apostolic origin. The style of the two epistles is different. The letter was not widely known in the early church, and many people in the second and third centuries A. D. were writing under the name Peter. Therefore, some scholars deny authorship of the epistle to Peter.

However, conservative scholarship regards the epistle as genuine and inspired. There is strong internal evidence for Petrine authorship. The claim of the author himself (1:1; 3:1); his imminent death as predicted by Jesus (1:14; cf. Jn. 21:18); he claims to have been present at the Transfiguration (1:16, 17; Cf. Mk. 9:5-7; Matt. 17:4, 5); he identifies himself as an apostle of Jesus (3:2). It is consistent with the character of the apostle whose name it bears. If Peter used a different scribe or no scribe at all would explain for difference in style between I and II Peter. The epistle slowly gained acceptance into the Canon. It has stood the test of criticism, bears the stamp of the Spirit and speaks the truth of God's Word to each listening soul. II Peter 3:7-14 is a remarkable piece of evidence that this is inspired by the Holy Spirit. It has such a remarkable grasp of facts in the light of the discovery of atomic scientists.

DATE: Assuming Petrine authorship, Second Peter was written between A. D. 64 and 68. Since Peter is anticipating his death (1:14) shortly before A. D. 67 would be the correct date. If it was written about A. D. 67 then one reason for the letter not receiving wide

publicity would be because the recipients were afraid to acknowledge the possession of it out of fear for their lives.

PLACE: Most scholars consider the city of Rome to be the place of writing.

RECIPIENTS: It was written to all believers, and especially to those who had received the previous letter three years before as described in 3:1. It was directed to Christians living in northern Asia Minor, among whom Peter had minister at some previous time. Between the writings of the two epistles, a change had taken place in their circumstances. The first epistle warned of outside dangers, the second epistle is concerned with internal danger of apostasy and false teachers.

PURPOSE: It warns against false teachings, corrects denials concerning the Second Coming of Jesus, and urges diligence and holiness. He is dealing with dangers from within the church. They are facing serious attack from people who are "friendly" to the Christian faith. False teachers have infiltrated the churches and turning many believers from the pure and sincere faith. Every true believer has a responsibility to guard the truth.

THEME: Be on the guard against false teachings and live with a view toward the return of Christ.

KEY VERSE: 3:11

KEY WORDS: "know," "knowledge" occurs sixteen times in three chapters.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JUDE AND II PETER: In content and language there is a resemblance between the two that is too strong to be accidental, though there are marked differences as well. If one is dependent on the other, which is the original? E. F. Scott writes: "Thus we have no choice but to regard II Peter as either a genuine writing of the Apostle, or as a later work which was deliberately composed in his name." Merrill C. Tenney adds: "It seems incredible that so barefaced a forgery should have been foisted on the Church without any protest. This document has not simply taken Peter's name, but it has professed to grow out of his experience."

If the internal evidence be taken at face value, it is plain that the epistle was written near the close of Peter's life, when persecution was threatening both him and the churches to whom he wrote (cf. I Pet. 4:14-19). In writing his first letter he had the aid of Silvanus (Silas) (I Pet. 5:12), who could smooth out his style, and who perhaps made several copies for general circulation, thereby insuring a wider knowledge of the epistle in the churches. The second epistle, if written without such aid, would show the cruder style of a Galilean fisherman, and would have a narrower distribution.

It is hard to avoid the conclusion that Jude is quoting Peter rather than vice-versa. If so, Jude becomes an external witness for the early date of II Peter rather than making it a late reproduction of Jude.

PROPHECY: One of the most definitive passages on inspiration in the New Testament is found in 1:21. It asserts unmistakably that the message of the Old Testament Scriptures is

the authoritative voice of God which must be interpreted in the light of total revelation. Cf. II Tim. 2:15 and 3:16. The allusion to Paul's epistles as "scriptures" in II Pet. 3:16 would indicate the beginning of the canon of the New Testament, though Peter claims no more for Paul's writings than Paul did for his own (I Thess. 2:13).

DELAY IN THE COMING OF CHRIST: Undoubtedly many in Peter's day were disappointed that the Lord did not come in their lifetime. Some were skeptical of the Christian's teachings and scoffing at them. Peter reminds them the delay of Christ's return was not the result of a mistaken prediction, but was rather a sign of God's desire to give man a longer opportunity to repent and believe. God lives outside the dimension of time."

Herries: "WARNING AGAINST FALSE TEACHING AND EXHORTATION TO HOLY LIVING

INTRODUCTION:

Peter is now advanced in years. In one of His last resurrection appearances, Jesus had predicted Peter would experience martyrdom in service and suffering (John 21:18). In this letter, Peter is conscious that the end is near (1:13-15).

The converts scattered throughout Asia Minor are now facing a different problem than what Peter addressed in his first epistle. When he wrote the first letter, the dangers were those that came from outside the church as pagans challenged the stand taken by new believers. Now the danger is from within the church from professing Christians who deny the basic doctrines of the faith (mainly that of the Second Coming) and who deny the Lord by the kind of lives they are living.

I. (CHAP 1) THE PROPER SETTING FOR FAITH IS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST THAT GOD GIVES TO ENABLE BELIEVERS TO GROW IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

This knowledge of Christ is based on the Word of God and results in right conduct.

A. (:5-11) Each of the 7 graces of the Christian life seemingly grows out of the preceding one and becomes the fertile soil in which the next is nourished

Faith = the basic soil in which virtue is planted. It's nourished and strengthened there. Faith produces morality. It's never lifeless. Trust in Christ always produces virtue or right conduct.

1. Virtue -- produces knowledge = practical skill in the details of Christian life
2. Knowledge -- blossoms into (temperance) self-control
3. Self-control -- has its fruit in endurance; curbs wrong desires from within
4. Endurance -- gives power to resist evils from without
5. Godliness -- the visible fruit seen by those you meet
6. Brotherly love -- the sweetness of the fruit as it is partaken
7. Charity of Love -- the propagation of the fruit

The constant attention that is paid to these virtues generated spiritual insight (:8-9)
B. (:16-21) Peter prizes these truths and promises to exert all his energies to making them known. The authority for such truths is the revealed Word of God.

II. (CHAP. 2) THE CHARACTER AND PUNISHMENT OF FALSE TEACHERS

A. The Exposure of the False Teachers (:1-3)

1. The Doom of the false teachers (:1) -- "*sudden destruction*"
2. The Conduct of the false teachers (:1) -- "*denying the Lord who bought them*"
3. The Influence of false teachers (:2, 3) -- "*Many shall follow*"

B. 3 Illustrations to show the Doom of False Teachers (:4-7)

1. Fallen angels -- based in pride (:4)
2. The world before the flood -- based in disobedience (:5)
3. Sodom and Gomorrah -- based in immorality (:6-7)

C. Gives Hope to the Righteous (:9)

III. (CHAP. 3) THE SECOND COMING SHOULD MOTIVATE THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE 7 GRACES OF CHRISTIAN CONDUCT

The temptation when evil prospers (cf. false teachers exposed above) and when the righteous suffer is to say 'Let's forget this business of Christian conduct and morality.'

A. The Certainty of His Coming

- found in the fact that the old world was punished when God brought forth by His Word a global flood (:5,6)
- But now the new world of which we are a part will be dealt with by His judgment at His Second Coming

B. The Time of His Coming

cannot be predicted but it is sure (:10) and it has a definite purpose (:11-13)

C. Conclusion (:17-18)"

OUTLINE OF 2 PETER

WATCH OUT ... STAY ON TRACK ... KEEP ON GROWING

**DILIGENT GROWTH IN THE TRUE KNOWLEDGE OF
OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST:**

- PROTECTS US AGAINST THE DESTRUCTIVE
HERESIES OF FALSE TEACHERS
- AND
- PREPARES US TO PERSEVERE IN GODLINESS AS
WE AWAIT HIS PROMISED RETURN

**(1:1-2) INTRODUCTION -- TRUE APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION = THE
FOUNDATION FOR GROWTH IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD (AND DIVINE
POWER FOR GODLINESS) REMAINS THE SAME (FOR US AS FOR THE
APOSTLES)**

- A. THE MODEL FOR GROWTH IN THE TRUE KNOWLEDGE OF OUR LORD
JESUS CHRIST = SIMON PETER
- B. THE ACTIVE INGREDIENT INSURING GROWTH =
THE SAME GIFT OF FAITH THAT STIRRED UP GROWTH AND FRUITFULNESS
IN THE LIVES OF PETER AND THE OTHER APOSTLES
- C. THE GROUNDS FOR GROWTH = THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF OUR GOD AND
SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST
- D. THE RESOURCES FOR GROWTH IN THE TRUE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST =
LARGE MEASURES OF GRACE AND PEACE

**(1:3-4) THESIS STATEMENT -- GOD HAS CALLED US AND EQUIPPED US
FOR GROWTH IN THE TRUE KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST**

- A. WE ARE CONNECTED TO GOD'S POWER
- B. WE ARE CONNECTED TO GOD'S PROMISES
- C. WE ARE CONNECTED TO GOD'S PERSON

D. WE ARE DISCONNECTED (DELIVERED) FROM SINFUL CORRUPTION

I. (:5-11) THE RECIPE FOR DILIGENT GROWTH IN KNOWING CHRIST

A. (1:5-7) 7 CHARACTER QUALITIES THAT MUST BE ADDED TO OUR FAITH FOR FRUITFUL SPIRITUAL GROWTH

1. Virtue, moral excellence
2. Knowledge
3. Self-control
4. Perseverance
5. Godliness
6. Brotherly kindness
7. Love

B. (1:8-11) FOUR BENEFITS OF CONSISTENT SPIRITUAL GROWTH

1. (:8) Fruitful life and ministry
2. (:9) Focused vision
3. (:10) Firm assurance
4. (:11) Future reward

II. (:12-21) SPIRITUAL LEADERS MUST CONTINUALLY REINFORCE THE TRUTH -- THE FOUNDATION OF TRUTH NEEDS CONSTANT REINFORCEMENT SO THAT WE CONTINUE TO GROW IN THE TRUE KNOWLEDGE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

A. (1:12-15) SPIRITUAL LEADERS MUST CONTINUALLY REINFORCE THE TRUTH:

1. Content of the truth
2. Urgency of reinforcing the truth
3. Goal of reinforcing the truth

B. (1:16-19) THE MESSAGE OF THE APOSTLES DEMANDS OUR ATTENTION BECAUSE THEY TASTED THE GLORY OF THE SECOND COMING ON THE MOUNT OF TRANSFIGURATION

C. (1:20-21) THE FOUNDATION = THE PROPHETIC INSPIRED WORD OF GOD

III. (2:1-22) DILIGENT GROWTH IN THE TRUE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST PROTECTS US AGAINST THE DESTRUCTIVE HERESIES OF FALSE TEACHERS

A. (2:1-3) DETECTING THEIR DECEPTION -- SNIFFING OUT FALSE TEACHERS

1. False teachers don't tell until they come out of their shell
2. False teachers excel at accumulating a large clientele
3. False teachers repel with a terrible smell
4. False teachers compel to make their pockets swell
5. False teachers rebel and will land in hell

B. (2:4-9) THE LORD KNOWS HOW TO RESERVE THE WICKED FOR JUDGMENT AND PRESERVE THE RIGHTEOUS FROM BEING POLLUTED

(THE REALITY OF FUTURE JUDGMENT AND THE PRESERVATION OF THE RIGHTEOUS)

1. (:4) Example of the sinning angels
2. (:5) Example of judgment of Noah's sinful generation vs. preservation of Noah and his family
3. (:6-8) Example of judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah vs. preservation of Lot
4. (:9) Proven Principle
 - a. The Lord knows how to preserve the righteous from being polluted
 - b. The Lord knows how to reserve the wicked for judgment

**C. (2:10-16) FALSE TEACHERS BLAZE A PATH OF DESTRUCTION AS THEY:
- PURSUE PERVERTED PLEASURES AND
- RESIST RIGHTEOUS RULE**

(HOW TO IDENTIFY FALSE TEACHERS / HOW DANGEROUS ARE THEY?)

1. They pursue perverted pleasures
2. They resist righteous rule
3. Example of both of these traits: Error of Balaam

D. (2:17-22) FALSE TEACHERS LURE OTHERS INTO THEIR FILTHY PIT BY PROMISING WHAT THEY CAN'T DELIVER

1. (:17a) Their Identity -- Who are these false teachers?
2. (:17b) Their Destiny -- Where are they headed"
3. (:18) Their Sensuality -- How do they operate?
4. (:19) Their Slavery -- What is their message?
5. (:20-22) Their Degradation -- How bad off are they?

IV. (3:1-18) DILIGENT GROWTH IN THE TRUE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST PREPARES US TO PERSEVERE IN HOLINESS AS WE AWAIT HIS PROMISED RETURN

**A. (3:1-9) THE WORD OF GOD WILL DELIVER ON ITS PROMISES IN ACCORDANCE WITH GOD'S TIMETABLE --
IT ALWAYS HAS ... IT ALWAYS WILL**

1. (:1-2) The Word of God deserves our attention
2. (:3-4) The Word of God comes under constant attack
3. (:5-6) The Word of God has proven its supernatural power in the past
 - a. Creation
 - b. Noah's Flood
4. (:7) The Word of God will bring catastrophic judgment in the future
5. (:8-9) The Word of God will fulfillment according to God's timetable

B. (3:10-13) GOD'S PROMISES ABOUT END TIMES MOTIVATE US TO PERSEVERE IN HOLINESS

1. This world is headed for destruction
2. Only holiness and godliness have lasting value
3. The new world will be characterized by righteousness

C. (:14-17) DILIGENT WATCHMEN ALWAYS STAND GUARD

- OVER PERSONAL CHARACTER
- OVER GOD'S TRUTH

1. (:14-15) Stand guard over personal character
2. (:16-17) Stand guard over God's Truth

(3:18) CONCLUSION -- SUMMARY OF THE THESIS STATEMENT
GROW AND GLORIFY

A. SPIRITUAL GROWTH IS THE PERSONAL GOAL

B. THE GLORY OF GOD IS THE COSMIC GOAL

TEXT: 2 Peter 1:1-2

TITLE: INTRODUCTION -- THE PETER PRINCIPLE

BIG IDEA:

TRUE APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION = THE FOUNDATION FOR GROWTH IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD (AND DIVINE POWER FOR GODLINESS) REMAINS THE SAME (FOR US AS FOR THE APOSTLES)

INTRODUCTION:

Concept of The Peter Principle in business

Are we truly following in the apostolic tradition?

I. THE MODEL FOR GROWTH IN THE TRUE KNOWLEDGE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST = SIMON PETER

A. Review His Humble Beginnings and Many Failures

- Unlearned Fisherman
- Bold and Impetuous
- Called by Jesus Christ
- Name Change -- Christ saw his potential
- Leadership position among the apostles
 - His confession of Christ
 - His walking on water
 - His presence at the Mount of Transfiguration
 - His presence at the empty grave
- Denial of Christ under pressure
- Foundational role in the formation of the church
 - *"upon this rock I will build my church"*
 - keys of the kingdom
 - Preaching in the Book of Acts
- Leader in the church at Jerusalem
- Confronted by Paul for his Hypocrisy and Legalism
- Roman Catholic elevation as the Initial Pope

Roper: "We are told four things in this introduction. First, we are told the author is Simon Peter. Simon was his Aramaic name; Peter was his Greek name. Both words mean essentially the same thing: rock. If Peter were living today we would probably call him Rocky. He has the same endearing qualities as the hero in the movie 'Rocky' -a sort of rough exterior, and yet, I think, inside, a sensitive heart. He was a man who, outwardly, acted indifferently-he seemed to be very calloused at times, not too sensitive to people's needs-yet inside he had a very soft heart toward the Lord's things, and a desire to be what God intended him to be. By the time he wrote this book he was an old man, probably in his seventies. He was one of the apostles, one of the twelve the

Lord called into a relationship with him. After the Lord's resurrection Peter was in Jerusalem for a time preaching, and, as a result of the persecution that broke out after the stoning of Stephen, he traveled to the north and settled in what today is Turkey - There he planted churches and ministered to the body of Christ. Shortly after Paul's death, he went to Rome. It was there that he lost his life, probably within a year of writing this letter. In fact, he may have been in prison at the time he wrote it, and he certainly was facing death, as he indicates in this book. As far as we know from tradition, Peter was crucified upside down outside the city of Rome, on the Ostian Way."

B. Peter as a Bond-Servant of Jesus Christ

"Simon Peter, a bond-servant"

Mounce: "*Doulos* was a title of honor. Moses was a '*servant of the Lord*' (Deut. 34:12), as were Joshua, David, Paul, and James. Both the prophets of the old dispensations (Amos 3:7) and those of the new (Acts 2:18) are called servants of God. While being a servant of God involves unquestioning obedience, the context is one of privilege rather than oppression."

C. Peter as an Apostle of Jesus Christ

"and apostle of Jesus Christ"

**II. THE ACTIVE INGREDIENT INSURING GROWTH =
THE SAME GIFT OF FAITH THAT STIRRED UP GROWTH AND
FRUITFULNESS IN THE LIVES OF PETER AND THE OTHER APOSTLES**

"to those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours"

Emphasis on the Sovereign Choice of God

Piper: "No matter how much authority a believer is given by Christ, he should never forget that the great joy of his life should simply be that he is saved by faith like all the other saints..."

Three things in this second half of verse 1 emphasize the spiritual equality of all believers before God. First, the phrase '*a faith of equal standing*' or '*like precious faith*.' Second, the word '*obtained*': '*to those who have obtained a faith of equal standing*.' It is used only three other times in the New Testament and in each case refers to obtaining something not by effort or desert but by lot (Luke 1:9; John 19:24; Acts 1:17). So the very word Peter chooses illustrates how futile it would be for any of us to boast in our faith. It came to us by God's choice, not by our prior effort. Then the third way of emphasizing the quality of believers in faith is to point out that what gives our faith value and distinction is Christ's righteousness, not ours. It says we have faith '*in (or by) the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ*.' The phrase may mean that our faith came '*by his righteousness*' (as the means), or that our faith is '*in his righteousness*' (as the object). In both cases the effect is to stress that Christ's unswerving faithfulness to do right is what we depend on, not our own righteousness. Therefore, we do not

boast in our faith, for we 'obtained' it as a gift and its foundation is not our righteousness but Christ's who is our God and Savior."

III. THE GROUNDS FOR GROWTH = THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF OUR GOD AND SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST

"by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ."

IV. THE RESOURCES FOR GROWTH IN THE TRUE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST = LARGE MEASURES OF GRACE AND PEACE

"Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord."

Piper: " If you want to enjoy God's peace and be the aroma of his grace in the world, your knowledge of him has to grow. Grace is not a mere deposit. It is a power that leads to godliness and eternal life. And where knowledge of the glory and excellence of God languishes, grace does not flow. The channel from God's infinite reservoir of grace into and through our lives is knowledge of God."

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) Many scholars have argued that the Apostle Peter did not actually write this book and that therefore it should not even be included in the canon of Scripture. What internal arguments can you find to support Peter's authorship?
- 2) Why does Peter refer to himself first as a *"bond-servant"* and only then as an *"apostle"*? What are the differences between this salutation and the one in 1 Peter?
- 3) Trace the emphasis on *"knowledge"* and the emphasis on *"godliness"* throughout the epistle. How do you rank the relative importance of each theme or the interrelationship between the two?
- 4) Do you find a Gentile reference (in terms of his audience) in the phrase in verse 1 -- *"who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours"*?

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Herries: " THE ATTITUDE OF A BONDSERVANT ALLOWS GOD TO PRODUCE IN US GRACE AND PEACE CONSISTENT WITH THE DIVINE NATURE

Introduction:

We are living in days when men rise to great heights in the areas of authority and then they act as though they are above the law because of their position.

"Power corrupts. Absolute power corrupts absolutely."

Apparently this was not true in the life of Peter

I. OUR MODEL: SIMON PETER -- AN APOSTLE, BUT FIRST A SERVANT

A. AN APOSTLE OF JESUS CHRIST

fascinating character; the more we read of him the more he appears like ourselves -- like Mr. average -- no scholar, no genius -- gives evidence of being both a good and bad leader, both a good and bad follower

one of the first to be selected by Jesus to be an apostle;

was with Jesus the longest of any of His followers;

was often referred to by the other apostles;

dictated many of the sayings of Christ to Mark who wrote the Gospel;

was one of the inner circle around Jesus;

quite often mentioned first in lists of the apostles

This was a heady position for a former fisherman when others had stronger formal education, background, culture, etc.

But Peter had a specific attitude concerning his relationship with Christ that brought everything into proper focus:

B. A SERVANT OF JESUS CHRIST

Note the sequence: first a servant, then an apostle of Jesus Christ
All the great spiritual leaders throughout Scripture held this same view of their position before God

1. Moses -- Ps. 105:26 "God sent Moses His servant"

2. David -- the greatest Biblical hero to the Jew today; he was an absolute monarch with absolute power
Ps. 119:125 "I am thy servant"

3. Paul -- most productive Christian; greatest evangelist, missionary, church-planter, theologian ... yet he begins his greatest theological work: "Paul, a bond-servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle" Rom. 1

Application: as Christians we are bond-servants of Christ:

He owns us because He purchased us at the cross; bought us out from the slave market of sin; made us a new creation in Himself

1 Cor. 6:19

It is from this perspective that we function in life: "Lord, what would you have me to do right now"

This attitude results in vs. 2: "grace and peace be multiplied to you"

II. PROBLEM: HOW DO WE HAVE THIS ATTITUDE OF A BOND-SERVANT AND RECEIVE GRACE AND PEACE IN OUR LIVES?

Few consider themselves bondservants of Christ;

Not too many Christians have grace and peace in their lives --

Reason: we are not conscious of how this is produced

vs.1: "through the righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ"

vs.2: "through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord"

We cannot produce this bondservant attitude nor achieve grace and peace thru our own activity and effort. It is through the work of God in Christ that these are produced in us."

Mounce: "The first letter dealt with difficulties from without. We learned how to suffer for doing good, even as Christ suffered (1 Pet. 3:17; 4:1, 16-19; 5:10). In fact, we actually *'participate in the sufferings of Christ'* (1 Pet. 4:13). Now, in this second letter, we will learn of difficulties from within the church. Chapter 2 and most of Chapter 3 deal with false teachers who surreptitiously bring in destructive heresies. One has to do with the return of Christ--which they smugly deny saying, 'Where is this *coming* he promised?' (2 Pet. 3-4)."

De Haan: cf. slogan "It's the real thing" by beverage company ... "When the Apostle Peter wrote his second epistle, he was deeply concerned about the danger posed to true believers by imitators ..."

Re vv. 1-4 -- "The Apostle laid the foundation of the entire epistle by establishing the fact that genuine salvation is a supernatural act -- the work of God from start to finish. This alone distinguishes the real thing from its many counterfeits. The new birth involves a divine call, the implanting of a divine nature, and the impartation of divine power for successful Christian living."

Eerdman: "This *'knowledge'* is the channel of *'grace,'* it is the ground of *'peace,'* it is the means of salvation, it is the instrument of all blessings. Peter writes to remind Christians of the content of this knowledge, to warn them of apostate teachers who are opposing it in the interests of a false *'knowledge,'* to encourage them to value and to develop this true knowledge of God and of Christ."

Green: "No doubt the insertion of *knowledge* here (it is not used in the greeting in 1 Peter) has a polemical thrust. It occurs three other times in 2 Peter (I. 3, 8, II. 20). Elsewhere, apart from a single reference in Hebrews (x. 26), it appears only in the later Epistles of Paul where it comes fifteen times. Peter was writing to people who claimed a real knowledge of God and of Christ, but continued in immoral behaviour. Knowledge may have been a catch-phrase of theirs which Peter takes up and fills with authentic Christian content. True knowledge of God and Christ produces grace and peace in the life; what is more, it produces holiness (verse 3). The whole New Testament unites in denouncing a profession of faith which makes no difference to behaviour."

Roper: "A Christian is someone who believes what the apostles believed. There are many people today who call themselves Christians, and they are very gracious and lovely people, but they do not believe what the apostles believed. Their faith is not grounded on apostolic teaching, and therefore they are not Christians. Certainly we should love them, make friends with them, we should care for them, minister to their needs, and never reject them as people. But they are not Christians. A Christian is someone who believes what the apostles believed, no matter where he is, or what he is, or what kind of culture or background or education or national heritage he has. He may be three feet tall, black, and wear a bone in his nose and sleep on a jungle floor. But if he believes what the apostles believed, he is my brother in Christ. Peter wants us to know that a Christian is someone who believes what the apostles believed."

TEXT: 2 Peter 1:3-4

TITLE: *THESIS STATEMENT: THE RIGHT STUFF*

BIG IDEA:

GOD HAS CALLED US AND EQUIPPED US FOR GROWTH IN THE TRUE KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST

INTRODUCTION :

We live in a Madison Ave. media-dominated society that bombards us with images of what it means to have "the right stuff."

cf. the Movie with Tom Cruise

cf. the problems girls have with eating disorders as they struggle with attaining that mythical body of the ultra thin models that grace the covers of our magazines

I. WE ARE CONNECTED TO GOD'S POWER

"seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence."

5 Dangers to Avoid in Trying to Tap Into God's Power for Your Spiritual Growth:

A. Don't Try to Rely on Your Own Resources (Limited / Finite)

"seeing that His divine power"

B. Don't Try to Grow By a "Works" Mentality

"has granted to us"

Wuest: "*Hath given*" is *doreo*, a stronger and more expressive word than *didomi*, '*to give*.' It means '*to grant or bestow*.' **Strachan** says that '*this word and its cognates always carry a certain regal sense describing an act of large-handed generosity*.' It is a perfect participle, speaking of the past completed act of presenting the gift with the present result that it is in the possession of the believer with no strings tied to it. It is his permanent possession, having been given by pure grace."

C. Don't Question the Sufficiency of God's Resources

"everything pertaining to"

1. All Circumstances / All Time -- "*life*"

emphasis probably on eternal life (which we already possess)

2. All Character -- "*and godliness*"

D. Don't Get Duped by Counterfeit / Powerless Knowledge

"through the true knowledge of Him"

E. Don't Lose Sight of Your High Calling

"who called us by His own glory and excellence"

Piper: "God's grace is a free power that works in us for our good. And the way it becomes active in our day to day life is through our knowledge of God, and one fact about God in particular: that *'he called us to his glory and excellence.'*"

II. WE ARE CONNECTED TO GOD'S PROMISES

"For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises"

A. Search Out the Promises that Pertain to Your Area of Need

B. Appreciate the Value of These Promises

1. *"precious"*

2. *"magnificent"*

C. Cling to These Promises with the Expectation of Spiritual Growth

Nieboer: "What is a Promise? One has defined a promise as an assurance on the part of another of some good for which we are dependent on him. The promise is of no value if the promiser is not able to give. A promise is not compulsory beyond that the promiser is expected to be a man of his word."

III. WE ARE CONNECTED TO GOD'S PERSON

"in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature"
opportunity to experience what it means to be growing in Christlikeness

How can we grow from being a possessor of the divine nature (positional) to being a partaker of that same divine nature (experiential)?

Luther: "But what is the nature of God? It is eternal righteousness, wisdom, eternal life, peace, joy and happiness, and everything good that can be named. Now whoever becomes a partaker of the nature of God, receives all this, namely, he lives forever, possesses endless peace, pleasure and joy, and is sincere, pure, just and almighty against Satan, sin and death."

IV. WE ARE DISCONNECTED (DELIVERED) FROM SINFUL CORRUPTION

"having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust."

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) What promises of God have proved to be *precious* and *magnificent* in our own spiritual journey? Do we make it a point to search for such promises in our devotional reading and cling to them throughout the day?
- 2) What are some examples of *false knowledge* that might appear attractive but are powerless to move us towards godliness and conformity to the divine nature?
- 3) Do we measure our growth in spiritual character against the person of Christ and the *divine nature* or against some other standard?
- 4) Trace the theme of *corruption* and the *lusts of the flesh* throughout this short epistle. Why does Peter place such an emphasis on deliverance from such corruption? How does this theme tie into his overall objective?

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Piper: "Let's look at this in three parts. First: the goal is that we obtain life and become godly people; second, the source of this life and godliness is divine power; third, the means by which this power produces this life and godliness is through knowledge of God..."

If the power of God does not flow into your life and make you godly you are not Christ's. 'All who are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God' (Rom. 8:14). The mark of sonship is divine power. And the mark of power is godliness; which means a love for the things of God and a walk in the ways of God...

And God teaches here what we so desperately need to know: that this liberation from sin and likeness to God comes by knowing and trusting his precious and very great promises.

Very practically I think this means we must day by day go to the Word of God and search for great promises. Fix one or two in your mind and hold them there before you all day. And use them to overcome temptation to sin and to incite you to daring acts of righteousness and love."

Ritchie: "Peter goes on to further encourage these Christians. They were struggling with their faithfulness in a corrupt world system, they were being harassed by false teachers and mockers, so he goes on to tell them about what was available to them to help them overcome. Verse 3a: 'seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness . . .' This is the key verse of this letter. It should be the

key to our lives. When we asked Jesus to become our Lord and Savior, the invisible but ever-present Lord took up residence in our hearts. He then generously granted from that moment in the past right up to the present moment, everything necessary to live life on this earth. His divine power became available to us to encourage, surround, protect and lead us regardless of the immediate circumstances. As he sat in his prison cell, Peter could look back over the last 30 years of his life and recall how Christ's divine power was generously granted him so that he could teach, heal, preach, encourage, shepherd and disciple. Whatever he needed, God's power granted to him the ability to live as God wanted life to be lived."

Roper: "All of God's power is available, concentrated, ready to be used in order to make us patient, joyful, to give us endurance, the very qualities we need to face life today. Then he says that this power is granted in two areas: life and godliness. These are the two areas with which we are most concerned: life, that is, what we do, the daily round of living, taking care of children, working, cleaning house, recreation, whatever it may be we are involved in, he is available for that; and godliness, was we are. He is talking about God- likeness, which is his aim for every person who comes to Jesus Christ. He has called us in order that he might make us the kind of men and women we were intended to be."

Lillie: "The nature, tendencies, and effect of sin, as a wasting, destroying blight, are well expressed by the term *corruption*; and the representation is a favorite one with our Apostle. Here he speaks of corruption as being '*through lust*,' or *in lust*; that is , as having its source or ground in lust -- in depraved affections and appetites, as '*the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life*' -- that 'evil concupiscence' in its manifold forms, which in the unrenewed heart holds the place due to the love of God, the Supreme Good."

Green: "These two verses abound in rare and daring words. Peter is very subtly using language uncommon in the New Testament but full of meaning in the pagan world The false teachers laid emphasis on knowledge; so Peter stresses that the object of knowledge in the Christian life is the Lord who calls men. They thought that knowledge dispensed with the need for morality, so Peter emphasizes two words common in pagan circles for ethical endeavour, *eusebeia* (*godliness*) and *arete* (*virtue*). They appear to have thought that holiness of living was impossible (see ii. 19, 20), so Peter speaks to them of the *divine power*, a Hebrew periphrasis for God. Rival pagan schoolmen asserted that you escaped from the toils of *corruption* (*phthora*) by becoming *partakers of the divine nature* either by *nomos* ('*lawkeeping*') or by *phusis* ('*nature*'). Peter takes up their language, and replies that it is by sheer grace."

De Haan: "Spiritual ineffectiveness is the inability to realize one's potential. In that sense, the Christian can be compared to an athlete who has tremendous physical ability but lacks the motivation to live up to his capabilities... Either because they have a bad attitude, or because they are unwilling to work on their weaknesses, they are a disappointment to those who expected greatness."

TEXT: 2 Peter 1:5-7

TITLE: 7 SPIRITUAL MATH FACTS = KEYS TO CHRISTLIKENESS

BIG IDEA:

7 CHARACTER QUALITIES THAT MUST BE ADDED TO OUR FAITH FOR FRUITFUL SPIRITUAL GROWTH

INTRODUCTION:

Kids, how well do you know your math facts?? Especially your addition facts?? Peter making things very simple as he reminds the believers how to add onto the foundation of their faith;
7 Spiritual Math Facts -- 7 Keys to Christlikeness
You want to be like Jesus Christ?? Here's how

Before we start our math lesson, we need to nail down our starting point --. What do we start with?

I. APPRECIATE YOUR FOUNDATION = REVIEW from last week (:1-4)

A. WE ARE CONNECTED TO GOD -- BY FAITH

"who have received a faith of the same kind as ours" -- what kind of faith did Peter have?

sovereign choice of God

consistent with the righteousness of God

Remember: *"without faith it is impossible to please God"*

but the beauty of it all is that we have the faith that makes it possible for us to please God

cf. Cutting down Christmas tree yesterday; trimming off some branches -- no longer connected to the life of the tree;

Christ: *"I am the vine; you are the branches"* we need to abide in Him; remain in connection with Him by faith

cf. Internet connection -- that modem makes the link and maintains the communication connection; turn that off and there is no connection

B. WE ARE CONNECTED TO GOD'S POWER --

HIS DIVINE POWER HAS GIVEN US EVERYTHING WE NEED FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH

"everything pertaining to life and godliness"

What good is an electrical extension cord if it is not plugged in? Plenty of power available, but we need to draw on God's power and count on it

No excuse to be defeated or discouraged in our Christian growth

C. WE ARE CONNECTED TO GOD'S PROMISES = PRECIOUS AND MAGNIFICENT PROMISES

God is the ultimate Promise Keeper

We have something to look forward to; to motivate us when times get hard

D. WE ARE CONNECTED TO GOD'S PERSON --
OPPORTUNITY TO EXPERIENCE WHAT IT MEANS TO BE PARTAKERS OF
THE DIVINE NATURE

E. WE ARE DISCONNECTED FROM THE CORRUPTION OF THE WORLD
(instead of in bondage to the corruption that comes from following the lusts of the
flesh)

This is the Foundation that we need to appreciate
"Now for this very reason"

II. APPLY ALL DILIGENCE

Sovereignty of God, and yet human responsibility

We are not called to "Let Go and Let God do everything" ; But: "Trust God and get
going"

We are called to exercise faith and apply all diligence to live like God wants us
to; not to work hard in order to be saved; but to work hard because we have been saved

Be quick to add these qualities into your life -- idea of eagerness, haste; don't
procrastinate;

earnestness; zeal; use of word in 2 Peter: vs.10; vs 15; 3:14 -- important tone
Heb. 6:11-12 Don't be sluggish

Have to keep applying this same diligence throughout your whole life; you never
advance beyond this to some resting point where you don't need to practice self-denial
and discipline and effort

Think of the context of 2 Peter -- What's the danger if we don't apply all diligence and
add the qualities of Christlikeness to the foundation of our faith?

- The pressure of persecution and suffering will cause us to quit the Christian
race;
- The attractiveness of false teaching will tickle our ears and promise us an
easier life;
- Those that mock the 2nd coming of Christ will cause us to doubt the reality of
God's promises to us -- which are precious and magnificent
- We will sink back into the corruption that is connected with the lusts of the
flesh

III. ADD IN ALL THE QUALITIES OF CHRISTLIKENESS

Compare how Christ exemplified each quality -- serves as our example; our role model
Compare how false teachers are characterized by just the opposite --in fact this is one

way they are exposed as false teachers; they have no fruit of genuine faith

Application: what are we doing in our life to try to cultivate this quality?

The word: "Add in" or "Supply" -- taken from the context of the Athenian drama festivals where a rich individual would sponsor the chorus with a very generous donation; the word came to mean generous and costly cooperation

Importance of the Order of these character qualities?? Seems to be some progression logically, one building on the other -- and yet in reality (in time and space) -- you cannot separate them into sequential steps on a ladder of faith -- you don't master one and go on to the next

1) THE SHINING GLORY OF CHRISTLIKENESS -- general word that sums up the whole section

(like in the list of elder qualifications where it starts off "blameless")

MORAL EXCELLENCE, VIRTUE goodness; redemptive acts of God; power; praise Phil. 4:8

a single basic meaning = eminence -- It can refer to excellence of achievement, to mastery in a specific field, or to endowment with higher power, or to both together that quality for which God is praised or praiseworthy; parallels the glory of God

Homer uses it as manliness; martial valour; developed into meaning of virtue -- **TNT**

BROWN: Plato saw virtue as conditioned by the soul; he developed the sequence of the four classic virtues:

wisdom, courage, prudence, and justice

The Hebrew language has no word corresponding to this Greek word in the NT:

- loyalty to the faith
- general term for good and correct behaviour in Christians

VINE: any particular moral excellence
taking the high road in terms of moral and character excellence

GREEN: It means "excellence" and was used to denote the proper fulfillment of anything. The excellence of a knife is to cut (not how pretty is the handle), of a horse to run (not how well groomed it is).

But what is the excellence of a man? His life must reflect something of the attractive character of Christ = the manliness which is Christlikeness"

we have been called "by His own glory and excellence" (1:3)

- A. Example of Christ: Transfiguration: (Mark 9:3 - glory, majesty; white garments)
2 Pet. 1:17 when He received honor and glory from God the Father

B. Counterfeit attempts by charismatic false teachers -- attract others to themselves

C. Application: 2 Cor. 3:18; 4:6; glowing with that inner glow that attracts others to Christ

- the fulfilled word of prophecy is like a lamp shining in a dark place 1:19

- our lives should be like a lamp shining in a dark place

"Moral excellence" seeks the character of God as the standard and goal for our own character.

2) KNOWLEDGE OF SPIRITUAL TRUTH

VINE's: knowledge - especially of spiritual truth; a seeking to know; inquiry; investigation

1 Pet. 1:14 we used to live in ignorance of the truth; slaves to our own lusts

1:12 we have been established in the truth -- we have a body of knowledge to build upon

2 Pet 3:18 we need to grow in our knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

A. Example of Christ: Luke 2:39-52 Christ in the temple at the age of 12

more important priorities than playing ball -- "*I must be about My Father's business*"

remember how well Christ knew the OT; quoted it all the time

John 14:6 I am the Truth

John 14:16-17 left us a Helper = the Spirit of Truth

B. Contrast to false knowledge of the false teachers

cf. Abuses by Gnostics -- word gnosis

1:16 cleverly devised tales

2:3 they will exploit you with false words

"You err not knowing the Scriptures or the power of God"

Jews had a zeal for God, *"but not according to knowledge"*

Phil. 1:9 abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment

C. Application: Does Truth float your boat?

Pursue the truth as more valuable than gold or silver

Protect the truth against false teachers

"I would not have you to be ignorant" Ignorance is not bliss

cf. Joking about the tax laws: Don't tell me; I don't want to know; I'm better off ignorant

(sometimes we think that way about truth -- Who needs more convictions)

continually have our minds transformed

3) SELF-CONTROL -- MASTERY OVER PHYSICAL APPETITES

A. Example of Christ: Temptation Account -- Luke 4

did not sacrifice His spiritual objectives to satisfy His physical appetites
How hungry was He after 40 days?

B. Contrast False Teachers -- whose god is their appetite (Phil. 3:19) -- Huge theme in 2 Peter

"many will follow their sensuality" 2 Pet. 2:2

"especially those who indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires" 2 Pet. 2:10

"having eyes full of adultery and that never cease from sin" 2 Pet. 2:14

"they entice by fleshly desires, by sensuality" 2 Pet. 2:18

"promising them freedom while they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved" 2 Pet. 2:19

"mockers following after their own lusts" 2 Pet. 3:3

C. Application:

Carr: "There are several area where we need to practice temperance:

1. Our Tongues -- (Gossip and telling another person off) Some people are doubting their salvation, being unfruitful, falling into sin, and have no spiritual discernment because they cannot control their tongues! (Ill. James 1:26; James 3:1-12; Ill. Pro. 26:20)

2. Our Tempers -- (Flying off the handle, getting mad and getting even.) Some people lack the blessings because they cannot control their temper. Temper can get you into big trouble! (Eph. 4:26) (Never think that holding a grudge, or trying to get even will help you. When you do these things, you have assumed the place of God -- Rom. 12:19)

3. Our Temptations -- Ill. Everyone is tempted -- 1 Cor. 10:13. However, not everyone falls into sin! The difference is self-control!"

4) PERSEVERANCE -- DON'T GIVE UP

Aristotle: self-control is concerned with pleasures and endurance with sorrows;
Perseverance is the commitment to suffer in the short term in order to experience glory for eternity.

A. Example of Christ -- Heb. 12:2 *"endured the cross"* (Phil. 2 -- *"obedient unto death, even the death on the cross"*)

B. Contrast of False Teachers -- John 10:12 *"He who is a hireling, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, beholds the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep, and flees"*

1 John 2:19 they (antichrists) went out from us

C. Application: What type of staying power do we have when we face tough times?
Cf. Message of 1 Peter -- embrace suffering as the will of God; don't run away from it
Need patience like the farmer to realize the fruit of the harvest

5) GODLINESS -- that piety that does what is well-pleasing to God the Father; devoutness; fear of God

A. Example of Christ: 1 Tim. 3:16

B. Contrast False Teachers: 2 Tim. 3:1-10 (esp. v. 5) parallel passage

C. Application -- 2 Pet. 3:11 Like Noah we live in a world of ungodliness; must keep before us the promise of His coming

Roper: ". . . godliness, i.e., the capacity to react to every circumstance as God would react. This was the great mark of Christ's life--he always acted as you would expect God to act. He was totally Godlike in every situation. I wonder if circumstances trigger this sort of response in us, or are our reactions, to use James' expression, "earthly; sensual devilish?" Do people evoke from us a godlike response? Do we respond in the same spirit of grace and holiness that would be true of God? What an exciting prospect!--called to be like God to reflect God's likeness to the world."

Ritchie: "Godliness is that God-given ability to reflect the character of Jesus in this corrupt society. We are to be holy, set apart to do the will of the Father, living rightly before God and men."

6) BROTHERLY KINDNESS

A. Example of Christ: 1 Thess. 4:9 *"Now as to the love of the brethren, you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another"*

John 13:34

B. Contrast False Teachers:

C. Application

Ritchie: "Peter is not referring to a duty here, rather he is speaking of the God-given ability to meet brothers and sisters from every nation, tribe and culture and feel the freedom to express spiritual kindness toward them."

7) SACRIFICIAL LOVE (for the World and even for our Enemies)

A. Example of Christ: John 10 -- the Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep
John 15 -- teaching on love
No questioning the Love of the Saviour
1 John 3:16-18

B. Contrast False Teachers:

C. Application:

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

1) What are some good examples of exercising *diligence* in working on these character traits vs. some bad examples of trying to substitute fanaticism for walking by grace through faith?

2) Why do you think *mastery over one's physical appetites* was such a prominent theme for Peter in this letter? How did Peter's approach to this issue differ from that of the counterfeit preachers?

3) What had Peter instructed them in 1 Peter with respect to *Perseverance*? Were these 2 epistles intended for basically the same audience?

4) What are the similarities and different points of emphasis between *brotherly kindness* and *agape love*?

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Herries: " A. (:5-11) Each of the 7 graces of the Christian life seemingly grows out of the preceding one and becomes the fertile soil in which the next is nourished

Faith -- the basic soil in which virtue is planted. It's nourished and strengthened there. Faith produces morality. It's never lifeless. Trust in Christ always produces virtue or right conduct.

- a. Virtue -- produces knowledge = practical skill in the details of Christian life
- b. Knowledge -- blossoms into (temperance) self-control

- c. Self-control -- has its fruit in endurance; curbs wrong desires from within
- d. Endurance -- gives power to resist evils from without
- e. Godliness -- the visible fruit seen by those you meet
- f. Brotherly love -- the sweetness of the fruit as it is partaken
- g. Charity or Love -- the propagation of the fruit"

Green:

"B. Christian virtues.

- 1) Faith - initial acceptance of the love of God.
 - a) Foundation of other virtues. Cp. Rom 5:1-5
- 2) Virtue - means excellence, proper fulfillment of a thing.
 - a) Our fulfillment is Christlikeness.
 - b) False teachers talked a lot about faith, but didn't live it.
- 3) Knowledge - intellectual element has an important place.
- 4) Self-control - for every aspect of life.
 - a) Means controlling the passions rather than being controlled by them.
 - 1> Socrates had a dictum that no one willingly rejects the best course once he sees it. (Nic. Eth. vii.3)
 - 2> Aristotle knew this was shallow, but had no answer to human wickedness, which is found only in Christ.
 - b) Religion cannot be divorced from ethics.
- 5) Perseverance - unmoved by difficulty or distress.
- 6) Godliness - better, reverence.
 - a) Practical awareness of God in every area of life.
- 7) Brotherly kindness - the distinguishing mark of true discipleship.
- 8) Love - the crown of Christian "advance."
 - a) It is evoked not by what we are, but what God is.
 - b) We are not lovable, but God is loving, so we should be."

Cobb: "Pretend that you are a chef trying to make a good stew in a crockpot. What types of things do you need to stir in to make a good stew? Note: You can't have too much of any of these ingredients. It is not like your stew would be ruined if you added a whole cup of salt. Instead, add each of these ingredients in generously. Each ingredient you add deepens and adds to the quality of each of the other ingredients.

Our Christian life began with FAITH. So this is the first ingredient in our character stew.

Now we need to work very hard and supply lots of FLAVOR -- GOODNESS -- VIRTUE. This is an essential ingredient because it sets our heart right. It is the flavoring for our character stew. I like to think of it as virtue or integrity or overall goodness.

Next we need a nice hefty portion of KNOWLEDGE. This is critical. Our stew would be ruined without this element -- very rich in vitamins and minerals. This quality is essential to the spiritual well-being of the soul as well. It's not enough to want to be good; we must have clear teaching from God's Word to instruct, encourage, and admonish us about how to be good and do right.

After this has simmered for awhile, bring in a large size package of SELF-CONTROL. All the knowledge in the world won't help us if we can't control our cravings and desires for what is wrong. It is never enough to simply know what is right. We must discipline ourselves to do what is right. This is kind of like the onions in our character stew. This ingredient often makes us cry as we develop it in our life. We have to learn to say "no" to so many of our desires.

As the stew is thickening, it is now time to heap in a heavy amount of PERSEVERANCE. The Christian life is a marathon, not a sprint. We need a lot of endurance. It is so easy to give up quickly and feel defeated and discouraged, so this ingredient is a very important one in our stew.

Allow your stew to simmer a long time after adding that last ingredient.

Now we supply the GODLINESS. This is an ingredient of total dedication to God. It calls into question whether or not my heart is completely surrendered to God to do His will and His work. Your stew may sour quickly if this ingredient isn't added in proper measure. (involves right motives; devotion to God; beware of just doing the right things for the wrong reasons)

Now it is time for the great big dose of BROTHERLY KINDNESS. Our faith is not good if it doesn't sweeten our heart and gentle our spirits. This is the stew tenderizer -- involves graciousness of spirit; making everyone feel like they are family.

Last of all, we must hunt for all the LOVE we can find to make the stew complete. This key ingredient will enable us to share all we have with those in need. It is an amazing ingredient in that the more we give away, the richer and sweeter our stew will become. So it is with life. The more love we give, the deeper will be the life we live; and deeper also will be our knowledge of Jesus Christ. (This will involve sacrifices; inconveniences; but things that we know God wants us to do.)

God makes us strong to reach out to others. He blesses us so that we can bless others. He does not call us to live in monasteries but to share the water of life with other thirsty souls."

Lloyd-Jones: "We see that each one of these qualities adds and contributes to the others; every one has its own importance and yet each one influences the others. We see the importance of vigour, and yet we see the importance of controlling vigour by knowledge. Every one has its own function, and yet each one affects the others and

therefore contributes to the whole. In other words, what impresses me most of all about this list is its perfect balance; and there is nothing about the Christian life that is so glorious as its perfect balance. There is no other life that has this balance. There are people who are highly intellectual and very cultured, but perhaps not moral; there are others who are morally blameless but not very intelligent; and there are those who have great will power, but somehow there is something lacking. There is no life that shows this perfect balance but the Christian life that is depicted here."

TEXT: 2 Peter 1:8-11

TITLE: *DON'T MESS WITH THE RECIPE!*

BIG IDEA:

FOUR BENEFITS OF CONSISTENT SPIRITUAL GROWTH

I. (:8) FRUITFUL LIFE AND MINISTRY

De Haan: "A Gratifying Effectiveness"

A. Qualification to Pursue

1. Possession of these qualities -- *"if these qualities are yours"*
2. Growth in these qualities -- *"and are increasing"*

B. Disqualification to Avoid

1. *they render you neither useless* -- good for nothing
2. *nor unfruitful* -- like a big thorn bush instead of an orange tree

C. Relationship to Refine

"in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ"

Paine: "This is a statement of the direction in which Christian conquest bears. The alternative is then mentioned. It is blindness and spiritual myopia, and a weakened sense of spiritual reality and life."

II. (:9) FOCUSED VISION

In contrast to:

A. Coming Up Short

"For he who lacks these qualities"

B. Lacking Clear Vision

1. *"is blind"*
2. *"or short-sighted"*

Cobb: " talking not to 2 different types of people here, but to 1 person who is both blind and short-sighted"

C. Overlooking the Point of the Atonement

"having forgotten his purification from his former sins"

Green: "Peter may have in mind here the public confession and vows taken by converts at their baptism (cf. Acts ii. 38, xxii. 16). Their old sins would then be those committed before they became Christians, the cleansing of which would be an essential corollary of being made a partaker of the divine nature. The man who makes no effort (verse 5)

to grow in grace is going back on his baptismal contract. This could be the start of apostasy."

III. (:10) FIRM ASSURANCE

A. Growth in Assurance of Salvation Requires Diligent Obedience

"Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you"

Piper: The confirmation of your election is your progress in sanctification. God predestined all the elect to be conformed to the image of Christ (Rom. 8:29). Therefore, the reassuring evidence of our election is Christ-likeness."

B. Future Stability Requires Diligent Obedience

"for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble"

Eerdman: "This does not mean that the Christian will never sin, but that such patient effort toward progress will safeguard him against faults and failings, and will assure the completion of his journey to the heavenly city."

IV. (:11) FUTURE REWARD

"for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you"

Paine: "Here is an intimation that heaven's society will not be classless. Good stewardship of Christ's riches will bear eternal proceeds. The Christian, endowed with wealth through Christ's provision, invests and saves for future wealth (cf. I Tim 6:19)."

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

1) You might want to ask others who know you well over an extended period of time if they have noticed any *growth* in the spiritual qualities Peter details in vv. 5-7. Can you observe any growth as you look back over your Christian experience?

2) What areas of *blindness* or *short-sightedness* do we struggle with? How can a clearer focus on the significance of the atonement help us to achieve a clearer vision of both our past and future?

3) How is personal responsibility and applying all *diligence* compatible with God's sovereignty in having *elected* us according to His own good pleasure from eternity past according to the counsel of His own will?

4) What do we learn about the *kingdom* from these brief verses?

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Carr: " A. v. 8 'These Things' Guarantee Your Fruitfulness -- If 'these things' are found in your life, then you will never be barren, but you will always be a fruitful branch for God's glory. This implies that you will be a witness and a soul winner for Jesus. Whatever 'these things' are, they must be pretty great because they promise us that we will always bear fruit. This, after all, is the goal of our Heavenly Father -- John 15:1-2. It is also proof of our faith in Him -- Luke 6:43-44.

(Ill. 'These things' will prevent the Christian from being shelved by the Lord, but will keep us productive and fruitful, 1 Cor. 9:27)

(Ill. Whatever 'these things' are, they must really be some big things! If they can do this, then I really want to know what they are. Don't you?)

B. v. 9a These Things Guarantee Spiritual Discernment -- Many people have absolutely no spiritual discernment. They are blind and easily lead astray, Eph. 4:14. But, when 'these things' are active in our lives, we will be able to see the tricks, traps and temptations of the Devil. We will be able to see the needs of others and not be blinded by our own selfish interests. We won't ever be blind and in spiritual darkness ever again. I don't know about you, but whatever 'these things' are, I want to know about them!

C. v. 9b These Things Guarantee You Absolute Assurance Of Salvation - Who among us hasn't doubted his/her salvation? We have all doubted from time to time! Many people are so overcome with their doubts that are of no use to the Lord. Evidently, they lack 'these things.' Because, 'these things' promise us that we can have assurance of salvation. They promise us that we can get to the place where we never doubt again! I tell you, 'these things' must really be something! Whatever 'these things' are, then I want to know them. I want to be secure in the knowledge that I am saved.

D. v. 10 These Things Guarantee That You Will Never Fall Again -- This verse says plainly that 'these things', if practiced in our lives, will ever keep us from falling. How many have fallen as a Christian? Every single one of us has fallen from time to time. But, 'these things' promise us a fall free life. If I can get my hands on 'these things' then I want them really bad because I never want to fall again. Whatever 'these things' are, they are worth going after if they will do all this."

Holwick: " Chuck Swindoll tells of a group of theologians who were discussing predestination and free will. The longer they talked, the hotter it got. And, as you might expect, the dissidents split into two groups. One poor fella didn't know which he believed, so he slipped into the ranks of the predestination crowd.

They challenged him as to why he was there.

"I came of my own free will," he answered innocently.

Frowning, they responded, "Free will? You can't join us.

You get over there!"

He retreated to the opposite group and faced the same challenging spirit.

"Listen, I was sent here," he answered honestly.

"Leave!" they demanded.

"You can't join us unless you come of your own free will!"

Cobb:

"BIG IDEA:

ALL OF THESE INGREDIENTS FOR SPIRITUAL STEW ARE ESSENTIAL BECAUSE:

I. IF YOU ARE GROWING YOU WILL BE KNOWING (:8)

How can I actually know Christ right now in my daily life? -- This is the question

A. 2 Criteria mentioned:

1. Possession of these qualities -- "*if these qualities are yours*"
2. Growth in these qualities -- "*and are increasing*"

B. Opportunity is there for anyone who will make the commitment

C. Opposite of Knowing Christ

1. *useless* -- good for nothing
2. *unfruitful* -- like a big thorn bush instead of an orange tree

II. IF GROWTH ISN'T HERE, RUIN IS NEAR (:9-10)

cf. a roll call where the person shows up (and answers "Here" when his name is called) but these qualities are absent (they don't show up for the roll call)

Why are you blind? because you are short-sighted; you only see yourself and what you want to do rather than what the Lord wants you to do; you live for today rather than for eternity.

What is it like to be blind?

- Forgetting how much Christ has forgiven you;
- how much your forgiveness cost Christ;
- how much He loves you

vs. 10 -- How do you really know you are saved?

How do you really know you are one of the elect?

Is your life bearing fruit as described above?

Blind people stumble a lot because they can't see where they are going

III. IF YOU KEEP ADDING MORE, YOU WILL FIND AN ABUNDANT DOOR (:11)

there are 2 different ways to look at this:

1) as we enter into heaven, a lavish welcome will greet us at the gates of heaven

Or

2) the more abundantly you know Christ here, the more you will experience God's kingdom in your own life right now

cf. 1:2 more grace and peace being multiplied to you;

Right now we are on the entrance path into our completed salvation; we need an ongoing rich supply of God Himself

CONCLUSION: Jer. 9:23-24"

De Haan: "The contrast between obedient and disobedient Christians as they enter heaven might be likened to the arrival of two ships into port after having encountered the same storm along the way. One is carelessly rigged, poorly manned, and badly commanded. Though it reaches the harbor, its cargo is gone, and its sails and masts have been blown away -- a derelict hulk towed along by a steamer.

The other vessel arrives in port properly captained. All sails are set and flags proudly waving. Everything is in order and the cargo is secure."

Clark: "To make my divinely decreed election certain to or for myself is simply a matter of assurance. Simply, not because the doctrine of assurance is guaranteed to be devoid of problems; but because it does not face the impossible problem of making God's decree more certain than God could make it. The text deals with assurance.

Kierkegaard, who should never be trusted has a good point, though even in this case he exaggerates, when he says we must in humility always be certain of others' salvation and always doubtful of our own. The idea of becoming assured of one's own salvation is perfectly Scriptural, and part of the method is self-examination. Therefore one commentator's view that we cannot make our own election sure, on the ground that only God can grant assurance, is without foundation; for though it is God who gives us certainty, he does this through several means. The same commentator's suggestion that Peter refers here to our making our election certain to others by our good works is altogether implausible. The idea of assuring others cannot be found in the text. The middle voice means oneself. The second half of 1:10 clearly indicates the individualism of the argument. Furthermore, since God alone can see and judge the heart, another person, an observer, can never be made certain by my good works. These are observable because external; my internal motives, an indispensable element in my moral standing, the observer cannot see.

The Lord may indeed grant me assurance of my election by means of my good works. Nor does this infringe on God's sovereignty or grace. Paul also admonishes us to work out our salvation in fear and trembling, for it is God who works in us not only to cause us to do good works, but even earlier to cause us to will to do them; and it is all of God's sovereign pleasure."

Piper: "The problem with the person who does not strive toward all the fruit of faith is that he is blind in two directions. When he looks to the future it's all a haze and the promises of God are swallowed up in a blur of worldly longings. I think that is what it means by shortsighted. And when he looks to the past the forgiveness that made him so excited at first is well-nigh forgotten, and all he sees is an empty prayer and a meaningless ritual of baptism. In other words, just as in verse 3 the power for godliness flows through knowledge of God, so in verse 9 blindness to the past and future work of God blocks that power and leaves us limp in the water, drifting toward destruction."

TEXT: 2 Peter 1:12-21

TITLE: *HAMMER HOME THE FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS -- BASED ON THE AUTHORITY OF PROPHETIC INSPIRATION*

BIG IDEA:

THE FOUNDATION OF TRUTH NEEDS CONSTANT REINFORCEMENT SO THAT WE CONTINUE TO GROW IN THE TRUE KNOWLEDGE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

This is the only way we will be able to stay on track in our spiritual lives when led astray by false teachers

INTRODUCTION:

Easy to get knocked off the track in our Christian life; cf. Trains at Christmas time; just the slightest nudge and they get knocked off the track

We are on the narrow way; it is the broad way that leads to destruction; cf. The balance beam in gymnastics -- hard to teeter on that and maintain your balance; a little nudge and you are gone

Context: false teachers denying the second coming of Christ in Judgment; no accountability so why not live for the lusts of the flesh; forget about moral excellence, knowledge of the truth, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, love In other words: forget about being like Jesus Christ and living out by faith the divine nature that has been given to us

Picture a town protected against flood waters by a dam of sandbags; you have to keep building the dam higher and plugging all of the leaks so that the water doesn't burst through and flood the town; you have to keep on reinforcing this man-made dam

WHERE DO WE GET THE REINFORCEMENT THAT WE NEED?? (Draw a face)

Keep on pointing our **ears, eyes, mouth, and nose** towards the truth;

Focus on the truth; Focus on the message preached by Jesus Christ and the

Apostles;

Don't give the time of day to the false prophets

Look at this passage from 2 perspectives:

- 1) the responsibility of the hearer
- 2) even more importantly: the responsibility of the spiritual leaders

I. THE EARS OF AN ELEPHANT (:12-15)

remember the truth that we have been taught; responsibility of teachers to keep on reminding us

large floppy elephant ears -- can take in and retain a lot of content;
cf. "the memory of an elephant"

SPIRITUAL LEADERS MUST CONTINUALLY REINFORCE THE TRUTH:

- A. CONTENT OF THE TRUTH
- B. URGENCY OF REINFORCING THE TRUTH
- C. GOAL OF REINFORCING THE TRUTH

A. CONTENT: Not New Revelation, but Repetition of Foundational Truth is Essential
(:12) *"Therefore, I shall always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you already know them, and have been established in the truth which is present with you."*

1. Be ready all of the time to fulfill this role

this was not some passing fad; not something that was only valuable in his cultural context -- this role needs to be performed all the time

Kids: don't you hate being reminded all of the time by Mom what you need to do;

Our Pride: I know that; don't tell me that again;

But we need to be reminded of many things

Different than nagging = to find fault all of the time in a criticizing fashion; to irritate by constant scolding or urging

2. Reminders can be both positive and negative (vs. 8-9)

Positive: review the ingredients of the character stew vs. 5-7

Negative: warn about the dangers of neglecting these qualities and failing to live by faith – Jude 1:5 = Warnings

Task = *"Recall to attention"*; *"call to mind"*:

We have all sorts of things deposited in our mind; what kind of handle do we have on these truths so that we can recall them and use them at the point where the battle rages;

Recall is different than recognition

We have so many tools to help us in this regard:

- taking notes
- filing the notes in such a way we can retrieve them and apply them
- database applications

What can be recalled from the heart and mind is much more effective than what can be recalled from the file cabinet or PC software program; the enemy won't always wait while we go to look up our notes

As we meditate on the truths; ponder on them as Mary did; turn them over in our mind; we make them our own

3. The same foundational truth which you already know is essential for continued growth
(scope is really the entire word of God -- it is sufficient; the knowledge mentioned in 1:5 -- especially that truth as it focuses on the person of Jesus Christ);
cf. The wire mesh added to concrete foundation to give strength; that grid of connecting truths that makes you strong and stable in the faith

Keep on reminding people of these same truths;
our union with the person of Jesus Christ

- temptation for the teacher to always want to be presenting new truths;
- temptation for the hearers to have itching ears that want to be scratched with some novel ideas

B. URGENCY to Reinforce the Truth while the Opportunity to do so is still Available (:13-14) *"And I consider it right, as long as I am in this earthly dwelling, to stir you up by way of reminder, knowing that the laying aside of my earthly dwelling is imminent, as also our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me."*

1. Task described as: "*stir up*", "awaken", "arouse" *by way of reminder*
cf. Difficulty of getting some kids up in the morning;
interesting: did not have that problem 6 AM on Christmas morning
what is the interest level of the particular individual in the subject?
2. Duty in the sense of what is obligatory as appropriate and necessary
"I consider it dikaios"
3. Image of a "tent" or "house" used for our physical body reminds us again that this is not our permanent home; the body is not what is ultimately important -- it is going to be laid aside, removed
4. Peter knew his time was short -- Context: Peter getting old; knowing that he is slated to die a martyr's death very soon (John 21:18-19)

Application: cf. What a short time we have to disciple our kids

Piper Re vs. 13 -- "Since the readers are already established in the truth, and since Peter's time is short on earth, Peter thinks that the right thing to do is spend his remaining time arousing their memory of these things. If the Lord told you this afternoon that your time is short, what would you devote yourself to? Peter answers: I am going to devote myself to increasing the lively memory of Christian truth. He is convinced that if he can keep the greatness of Christ's work and promises in the memory, believers will be awakened and aroused to hope in those promises and be diligent to grow in godliness and thus confirm their call and election."

C. GOAL = Recall without the Prompting or even the Presence of the Spiritual Leader (:15) *"And I will also be diligent that at any time after my departure you may be able to call these things to mind."*

Retention when Spiritual Leader is no longer around

my (emphatic) exodus: -- departure
requires diligence on Peter's part while he has opportunity

don't make your disciples dependent on you; make them disciples of the Lord
teach them how to feed themselves from the written word of God

Interesting: Peter seems to have a consciousness in this section that he is being used by God in the process of Inspiration to write prophetic words that will continue to teach the church after his departure

II. THE EYES AND EARS OF AN APOSTLE (:16-19)

pay attention to the testimony of those who were Eyewitnesses and Earwitnesses of Majesty

THE MESSAGE OF THE APOSTLES DEMANDS OUR ATTENTION BECAUSE THEY TASTED THE GLORY OF THE SECOND COMING ON THE MOUNT OF TRANSFIGURATION

The apostles know what they are talking about ("we")
in contrast to the false apostles and the false teachers who weren't present on the Mount (but sure make a lot of arrogant boasts about the validity of their fables)

Peter got to sample what was coming; like Coming Attractions; a sneak preview; Jesus had laid aside His visible glory while on earth, but here the curtain is pulled back and we get just a glimpse of that glory

A. The Credibility of Eyewitness Testimony

vs. 16 *"For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty."*

"when we made known to you" -- dealing with apostolic revelation

"make known, reveal"

John 15:15 *"All things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you"*

going to remind us in this section: the source of the revelation was from God, not from man

Transfiguration Account -- Luke 9:26-36

reference to the return of the Lord in glory and power followed by the

Transfiguration account

Why Moses and Elijah? Representing the Law and the Prophets -- Deut. 18:15 (Moses was the prototype prophet)

God's revelation:

Heb. 1:1-4 God spoke long ago in the Law and the Prophets -- *"in these last days has spoken to us in His Son-- the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature"*

Peter, James and John had been sleeping -- God wanted them to listen up and remember: If you want to arouse the sleeping ones; stir someone up so that they remember what you say -- a dose of the glory of God will do the trick

subject of discussion: the exodus (departure) of Jesus that was imminent (just as Peter was thinking about his own imminent death) -- 9:31 connection between death and entrance into glory and the Second Coming in power and glory to establish God's kingdom on earth

In what sense did Peter not understand what he was talking about?

1) Peter wanted to skip the transitional step of death -- let's hang on to this present state -- make 3 tents

"it is good for us to be here"

2) More importantly:

Peter making a huge mistake to treat Moses and Elijah and Christ with almost the same reverence;

(3 tents) -- God makes it very clear that there is a tremendous distinction

Piper: "Confidence in Christ's future coming in power is based, not on a myth, but on an eyewitness experience of his majesty in the past. The difference between mythical speculations and Christian faith is history. Our doctrines are not the result of clever head-work. They are the result of historical observation."

B. The Majesty of Divine Testimony

vs. 17 *"For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, 'This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased.'"*

God the Father saying: *"LISTEN TO MY BELOVED SON IN WHOM I AM WELL-PLEASED"*

cf. How parents and teachers are always saying: "Listen to me"

(Remember: 2 different perspectives in this section in 2 Peter:

1) responsibility of spiritual leaders to reinforce the foundational truths

2) responsibility of all to listen to the message, to have their memory stirred up; to pay attention) I just wanted to remind you

the Doctrine in Question: the power and second coming of Christ

this was under attack by the false teachers (3:1-4)

3:10 the day of the Lord will come like a thief (unannounced, when you don't expect it)

C. The Corroboration of Apostolic Experience

vs 18 *"and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain."*

not following cleverly devised tales:

tradition = Jewish tales; the different rabbinical schools embellishing upon OT history

philosophy = all types of wild esoteric "knowledge" such as that dreamed up by the gnostics = too complicated to explain

Problem with lies: hard to maintain consistency; they have to be cleverly devised in order to have any chance of gaining a hearing

D. The Impact of Such Testimony

vs. 19 -- *"And so we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts."*

the "we" here does not refer to all the saints; but to the apostles -- track the use of "we" and "you" throughout this section

Peter referring to himself and to all the apostles who made known the power and the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ

Lenski: "the opinion that Peter compares the prophetic Word with the transfiguration and calls this Word 'more sure' than the transfiguration or than all the majesty which the apostles came to see in Christ is untenable. No, after seeing Christ's majesty the Old Testament prophecies were surer than ever to the apostles; they based nothing of their preaching on 'myths' of any kind. By its fulfillment the fulfilled prophecy is naturally made more sure than it was while it was still awaiting fulfillment."

Peter had a healthy respect for the prophetic word -- 1 Pet. 1:10-12

By extension, Peter is going to place his revelation and that of the apostles on the same level

"morning star arises in your hearts" -- Rev. 22:16

Piper: "And what is the hope that lures us on to walk in the light as he is in the light? Two things: dawn without and daystar within."

III. THE MOUTH OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (:20-21) -- THE PROPHETIC INSPIRED WORD OF GOD

listen only to those words (teachings) that originate from God rather than from man

"But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God."

A. The Importance of This Subject of Revelation / Inspiration

"But know this first of all"

Peter about to leave this earth; feels the burden to remind the believers of the foundational truths that are crucial to their growth and stability; wants to reinforce the authority and adequacy of the Scriptures -- the written revelation that will be available even when he is not present with them

Great passage on the Revelation / Inspiration of Scriptures -- What process did God use? You hear all the time the smokescreen excuse: "Everyone has their own interpretation of the Bible; therefore, no objective meaning can be attained; therefore, why even study it?"

B. The Source of the Revelation Must Determine the Method of the Interpretation

1. Sourced in God

- absolute truth
- objective truth
- unalterable truth

2. Interpreted from that Perspective

C. The Process of Revelation / Inspiration

IV. THE NOSE OF DISCERNMENT (2:1-22)

-- sniffing out the rotten lies of the false prophets

(Reference future messages)

CONCLUSION:

Theme Song:

Be careful little ears what you hear...
Be careful little eyes what you see ...
Be careful little mouth what you say ...
Be careful little nose what you smell ...

Benediction: Romans 16:25-27

"Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past, but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to the obedience of faith; to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen"

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DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) Are we receptive to be reminded of fundamental spiritual truths or are we always itching to be taught something new?
- 2) What effect do you think witnessing the glory of Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration would have had on you? How does Peter's testimony help to bolster our faith in the *"power and coming our Lord Jesus Christ"*?
- 3) Are we seeking approval from men or do we long for the final confirmation of a life that has been well-pleasing to our Master?
- 4) Are we able to adequately explain the doctrines of Revelation and Inspiration of the Scriptures?

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Herries: " A CHRISTIAN VIEW OF DEATH -- MOTIVATION FOR SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Introduction:

Death always seems to come unexpectedly. It is always at an inconvenient time. Never fits our own time schedule. We always feel more could be done with life, but it is cut off so soon.

Some respond:

- 1) in dread and fear
- 2) as a challenge to do more work harder for others
- 3) in defeat and giving up

Youth always think of death as the distant future

Middle age views it as ...

Old age = inevitable

I. PETER HAS A POSITIVE CHRISTIAN ATTITUDE TOWARD HIS OWN DEATH

A. (:12-13) My death is near but I'm going to keep prodding you about

your spiritual growth

3 times he reminds them this is his position

1. (:12) I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things
2. (:13) I think it right to stir you up (agitate and create a storm -- develop a typhoon of pressure) by putting you in remembrance
3. (:15) I'm going to keep on after my death to see to it that you will keep these things in remembrance
 - a. Mark, his companion, wrote his gospel based on what he heard from Peter
 - b. Peter wrote these 2 epistles

The nearness of death was a challenge to Peter to increase his witness for Christ

B. One reason Peter had this attitude was because he held a Christian view of death

Notice the word pictures he uses to describe death

1. (:14) a putting off (laying aside) of this tabernacle
2 Cor. 5:1,8
for the Christian death is leaving 1 house = earth, and moving to another house = heavenly; Death is moving day: some doubts, fears, concerns, but day of excitement, new beginning
2. (:15) speaks of death as an exodus
refers to children of Israel leaving bondage of Egypt and going to the land of promise, victory, freedom

We don't depart this life and go into some lifeless abyss of darkness and annihilation; we enter in joy into new existence; time of victory
"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

II. (:16-18) PETER HAS FAR MORE TO OFFER THE CHRISTIANS THAN GOD'S REVELATION OF DEATH SO "STIR THEM UP" IN SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT --

REMEMBER: HE'S COMING AGAIN

A. The Reality of the Second Coming

1. the word "coming" = parousia -- used throughout NT for Second Coming of Christ; used by Jesus: Matt. 24:27,37
this coming is personal, real, in history
word used 24 times in various ways; it carries a strong emphasis on the idea of a personal presence -- for one to be near or alongside of another; most often used to refer to the act by which a person becomes near = His coming
Paul uses the word: 1 Cor. 15:22-23; 1 Thess. 3:12,13

2. This teaching is not based on fiction
we have "not followed cunningly devised fables"

B. What Jesus will be like at His Second Coming -- Transfiguration Exper.
Peter tells us he had a glimpse of what Jesus will be like

:16 - we were eyewitnesses of His majesty -- Matt. 17:1-5
metamorphosis: a complete change yet recognizable as Jesus in the flesh;
1 Cor. 15 describes an earthly body with properties adapted to life
on this earth and a heavenly body fit for heaven

Conclusion:

Why should I be concerned about my own spiritual growth?
many don't seem concerned about this issue at all
even the apostle recognized he had a long way to go in spiritual develop
before reaching full maturity

1) because there is more to life than just muddling through this physical
existence on earth; there's life beyond the grave

a) death is the disrobing room -- where we change clothes --
put on the new tabernacle that is heavenly

b) death is only an exodus, a departure from this life and an
arrival in our new life

I want to be at my maximum spiritual development when that time comes

2) Furthermore, Christ is coming again -- maybe before death comes!

While I am still alive I certainly want to be at my best to meet Him"

Herries: " WHY CAN WE TRUST THE TEACHINGS OF THE BIBLE?

A. The Bible is not of human origin, but of divine origin

1. "not of private interpretation" (:20) "to unfold" -- interesting
word -- cf. Rev. 5:2 where Jesus steps forward to open = unfold the
scroll so He can then read the plan of the Ages yet to come;
man by his own mind did not unfold the truths and record them in
the pages of the Bible. The words are from God. It's not the fruit
of man's mind alone.

2. spoke "as they were moved" by the Holy Spirit (:21)

Mark 2:1-5 paralytic man carried by 4 men to Jesus; so the Holy
Spirit carried the writers of the Bible along, guiding them, guarding
them, providing for them until all was completed;
the Holy Spirit through human writers produced God's authentic and
authoritative Word = the Bible.

B. 3 General Views of Inspiration have arisen:

1. Dictation Theory (Amanuensis) --

The Holy Spirit merely used human authors as secretaries to record
exactly what He dictated. But this theory breaks down for each book
can be shown to have its own style and reflect the personality of its
human author

2. Verbal Theory (Plenary) --

The authors were directed in the very words that were used

3. Dynamic Theory --

Says the thoughts (but not necessarily the words) are inspired.

The problem here is how do you convey thoughts without words? Perhaps some combination of these is the best conclusion: The Holy Spirit so guarded the words the authors chose to use that the thoughts are God's thoughts without error.

We can therefore trust the Bible as God's Word = "an infallible rule for faith (what we are to believe) and for practice (how we are to live) because it was given by the inspiration of God through the Holy Spirit."

Holwick: "MISTAKES IN THE BIBLE" (- title of his message)

I. Inerrancy.

A. Meaning of terms.

- 1) "Inerrancy" - the Bible does not contain errors.
- 2) "Infallibility" is even stronger - it cannot contain errors.
 - a) (Some use infallibility in a lesser sense)

B. Inerrancy is related to doctrine of inspiration, in that a book from a perfect God would not contain errors.

C. Different forms of inspiration are held.

- 1) Dictation. Authors heard words, wrote them down. [fundamentalism]
- 2) Plenary*. Authors wrote as they felt moved by Spirit, but reflected their own cultures. Also called verbal inspiration. [evangelicalism]
- 3) Partial. Some is inspired (theology, morality) some may not be (history, science). [CS Lewis]
- 4) Illumination. A completely human process where they gave their best ideas about God. [liberalism]

II. Historical review.

A. The Bible presents itself as true and trustworthy.

- 1) Psalm 119:138,144,160 God's Law is trustworthy and right.
- 2) Luke 1:20 Predictive prophecy comes true.
- 3) Romans 3:4 God is true, people are liars.
- 4) 1 Thess. 2:13 The apostles' word was God's Word.
- 5) 2 Peter 1:20-21 Scripture is from God, not humans.
- 6) Revelation 21:5 The angel's message is true.

B. Jesus used the Bible as his final authority.

- 1) It is greater than human tradition. Mark 7:6-13
- 2) No part of the Law can be set aside as useless. Luke 16:17
- 3) Everything in the Bible will be accomplished. Matt. 5:17-19
- 4) It cannot be broken. John 10:35
- 5) What the Bible says, God says. Matt 15:4; 22:31
- 6) Arguments can be decided on the basis of one word. Matt 22:45

C. The early Church Fathers, the Reformers (Luther, Calvin, etc), Evangelical Protestants, Roman Catholics and Orthodox churches all believe the Bible is without error.

D. Liberal Christians deny it. But note comment by liberal scholar

Kirsopp Lake: "How many were there, for instance, in Christian churches in the 18th century who doubted the infallible inspiration of the Bible? A few, perhaps, but very few....It is we [liberals] who have departed from the tradition. The Bible is on the fundamentalist side."

III. Problems with inerrancy.

A. Discrepancies within Scripture.

- 1) Parallel Bible passages sometimes give conflicting accounts of the same event. (Scholars have known this for thousands of years)
 - a) The census of Israel.
 - 1> Instigated by Satan. 1 Chronicles 21:1
 - 2> Instigated by God. 2 Samuel 24:1
 - b) Healing of blind man(men) by Jesus outside Jericho.
 - 1> Jesus leaving Jericho, meets two blind men. Matt 20:29
 - 2> Jesus leaving Jericho, one blind man jumps up. Mark 10:46
 - 3> Jesus entering Jericho, one blind man carried. Luke 18:35
 - c) The death of Judas.
 - 1> Hanging. Matt 27:5
 - 2> Fall and split open. Acts 1:18
- 2) Wording of conversations can differ.
 - a) Variations between 1&2 Kings and 1&2 Chronicles.
 - b) Compare what God tells Cornelius in Acts 10:4 and what Cornelius says God said in Acts 10:31.
 - c) Note differences in gospels concerning Jesus' sermons.

B. Scientific disagreement.

- 1) Scientific mistakes.
 - a) Rabbits do NOT chew their cud. Leviticus 11:6
 - b) Slugs don't melt. Psalm 58:8
 - c) Mustard seed is NOT smallest in world. Mark 4:31
 - d) The earth does not have four corners. Revelation 7:1
- 2) Miracles.
 - a) Talking donkey. Numbers 22:28
 - b) Creation in six days. Genesis 1 & 2
 - c) Flat earth with 4 corners. Ezekiel 7:2; Revelation 7:1
 - 1> But note the "circle of the earth." Isaiah 40:22
 - d) The sun stands still. Joshua 10:13
- 3) History.
 - a) Archaeologist Kathleen Kenyon said Jericho was uninhabited at the time Joshua arrived to capture it.
(A recent archaeologist believes she was wrong; even the walls show evidence of falling down.)
 - b) Archaeologists find no evidence King Darius ruled in Babylon, or even existed. Daniel 5:31, 9:1

IV. Answers to problems.

- A. God can perform any miracle he wants. It may not seem "scientific" to us, but it could still be real.
- B. Discrepancies in many passages can be harmonized.
 - 1) Judas may have hung himself, the rope broke, and he fell on the ground.
 - 2) Jericho had an old city and a new city in Jesus' day.
 - 3) Ancient historical records (King Darius) are incomplete.
- C. Questions about specific problems will always occur. The Bible does not have to be "proved" to be accepted as trustworthy.

V. Importance of inerrancy.

- A. If some of Bible can be false, all can be false.
 - 1) A Bible that is not trusted will not be obeyed.
- B. Denominations that have departed from belief in an inerrant Bible have withered.
 - 1) Methodists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians - American Baptists.
- C. Jesus Christ believed the Bible was fully trustworthy.
 - 1) Denying inerrancy denies Jesus' lordship over us.
 - 2) Is Jesus your Lord?

Main source: "Why I Still Believe the Bible is True," by
Kenneth Kantzer, Christianity Today, Oct 7, 1988, p. 22."

Piper: What does Peter mean that '*no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation,*' or, as the RSV says, '*no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation*'? I think it is only fair for me to mention three ways this verse has been understood, and then show why I only accept one of these ways. First, there are excellent evangelical Bible scholars who say that verse 20 has nothing to do with our interpretation of prophecy but rather with the prophet's interpretation of history. In other words when Peter says, '*no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation,*' he means, 'no prophecy ever came from a prophet's private interpretation of historical events.' Rather, as verse 21 says, prophecies came from God through the Holy Spirit. So the connection with verse 19 would be: 'Give heed to the prophetic word ... because no prophecy is a mere private human interpretation of events; it is from God through the Spirit.' I find that understanding of verse 20 almost persuasive, but not quite.

A second very important understanding of verse 20 is the typical Roman Catholic one. They have generally said, 'No, verse 20 does refer to how we interpret prophecy, not how prophets interpret history. And the point is that no private individual can interpret prophecy on his own. Rather the Scriptures have been entrusted to the church and the individuals must look to the official pronouncements of the church to know the true teaching of Scripture.' Until twenty years ago and the second Vatican Council, that kind

of thinking had kept the Scriptures concealed in Latin and had kept the average Catholic lay person in woeful ignorance of Scriptures. Much of that is changing now. But evidently it is still true for many Catholics that the church gives credence to the Scripture, not Scripture to the church. It is the same old problem of the Reformation: in practice, ecclesiastical tradition, not Scripture, is supreme. And I want us to be very aware that one of the hallmarks of our Protestant faith is that the church and its ministers are judged by Scripture and not vice versa.

I will mention one other way of understanding verse 20. *'No prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation'* can mean no individual should interpret prophecy according to his own personal whim. You can't just give Scripture any old meaning you please. There is a true meaning (according to v. 21) which comes from God through the prophet and this is our standard.

Now which of these three views of verse 20 is most likely Peter's view? As far as the usual Catholic interpretation is concerned it just can't be gotten out of the text. There is not a word about who should replace the individual as the reliable interpreter of prophecy. That has to be read into the text. It can't be gotten out of it. So for me the choice is between the first and third views. Is verse 20 saying that no prophecy is the result of a prophet's private interpretation of history? Or is it saying that no prophecy, after it is given, should be twisted by individuals to make it mean whatever they like?

I think verse 20 is a warning not to play fast and loose with the meaning of Scripture. The reason I opt for this second view is that the false teachers which Peter has in view did apparently not deny the inspiration of the prophets but rather twisted the prophetic writings to suit their own false teaching. We know that Peter had false teachers in mind here because the very next sentence in 2:1 says, *'False prophets also arose among the people just as there will be false teachers among you.'* And the key text for understanding how these false teachers related to Scripture is found in 2 Peter 3:16. In 3:15 Peter says that the apostle Paul has written about similar things in his letters. Then he says, *'There are some things in them hard to understand which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction as they do the other Scriptures.'* These last words show how the false teachers related to the Old Testament Scriptures. They don't reject them. They don't deny that prophecies came from God. They twist them to suit their own private purposes. Therefore, since Peter is concerned in this letter with false teachers who twist the meaning of Scripture to fit their own personal desires the most likely meaning of verse 20 is that the prophetic Scriptures may not be handled that way. *'No prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation,'* means then, "no individual is entitled to interpret prophecy, or Scripture generally, according to his personal whim" (Kelly)."

TEXT: 2 Peter 2:1-3 John Cobb

TITLE: *PREACHERS IN THE PIGPEN*

BIG IDEA:
DETECTING THEIR DECEPTION -- SNIFFING OUT FALSE TEACHERS

INTRODUCTION:

What does a Pigpen smell like?

Matt. 7:15-23 important to examine the fruit

Matt. 13:24-30,36-43 the enemy is busy sowing tares among the Christian churches

Why does Peter feel that it is necessary to warn his readers about false teachers? (cf. similar message in Jude)

Historical Context: time of the apostles is fading; it has been over 30 years since the ascension of Christ; false teachers have crept into the church and are gaining momentum; Peter wants to go on record on these issues before he is gone

cf. *Battle for the Bible* by **Harold Lindsell** -- deals mainly with issues of inerrancy and with the trend toward apostasy in major mainline denominations and seminaries; no wonder that the people are being taught error when you look at what the seminary professors no longer believe

cf. the battle back in the 1920s with Modernism; a series of books called the *The Fundamentals* was published

cf. illustration regarding roommate of R.C.Sproul who went before the examining board on his oral exam and did not tell them where he was waffling so that he could get his diploma; he ended up on the board that was asking the questions of R.C. Sproul!

I. FALSE TEACHERS DON'T TELL UNTIL THEY COME OUT OF THEIR SHELL

"But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves." (2 Peter 2:1)

they come in secretly with a hidden agenda; they smile and sign your doctrinal statement and profess to agree with you; then they have opportunity to teach; then they start to sneak in their false doctrine in subtle ways

A. They Duplicate the False Prophets of the Old Testament
study the passage on false prophets in Jeremiah 23

- B. They Disseminate Destructive, Damnable Heresies
 - "damnable" -- the kind of teachings that destroy the gospel and keep people from coming to Christ;
 - scattering seeds
- C. They Deny the Lord ("despot" or "absolute Ruler") Who Bought Them
 - cf. other NT reference to "deny" = Matt. 10:33 those that "deny" Christ, He will utterly and totally deny... (uses more emphatic form of same word)
 - cf. peer pressure -- leads you to compromise God's revealed standard of Holiness
- D. They Destroy Themselves By Calling Out for God's Righteous Judgment
 - cf. Rev. 2-3 -- record of Christ's judgment against apostasy in the churches

II. FALSE TEACHERS EXCEL AT ACCUMULATING A LARGE CLIENTELE

"and many will follow their sensuality" (2 Peter 2:2a)

- A. They are Sensational
- B. They are Sensual -- lasciviousness (opposite of self-control -- cf. other references in 1 and 2 Peter)
 - especially in the area of immorality

John Cobb Maxim:

"If he looks like a rose, but smells like a pig;
don't be impressed if his church is real big!"

III. FALSE TEACHERS REPEL WITH A TERRIBLE SMELL

"and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned" (2 Peter 2:2b)

examine the way they live

- A. They are the Tares that are Planted in with the Wheat in an Attempt to Ruin the Harvest
- B. They are the Rotten Apple that Sits in the Bag with all the other Apples and will Corrupt All
- C. They are the Leaven that Seeks to Permeate the Whole Loaf
- D. They are the Manure on the Doormat of the Church that Turns the Unbelievers Away

people say: 'I know so and so who goes to that church and he does such and such; I could never go there because they are such hypocrites'

cf. notable examples of well-know TV preachers who have been exposed for immoral living and hurt the testimony of Christ

Don't lower the standard of what God calls Holiness; don't judge according to externals:

Who gives the best polished message;

Who looks good on the platform under the lights; etc.

IV. FALSE TEACHERS COMPEL TO MAKE THEIR POCKETS SWELL

"and in their greed they will exploit you with false words" (2 Peter 2:3a)

A. **Lenski**: "they have no concern for the sheep, but only for shearing the wool"
they are in it for the money

B. "*Exploit*" = to make merchandise of
you are a valuable member of their congregation...but only because you make significant contributions that fill the offering plate

C. "*false words*" = made up words
cf. made up doctrines of Joseph Smith and the Mormons

Wiersbe: "Plastic words! Words that can be twisted to mean anything you want them to mean! The false teachers use our vocabulary, but they do not use our dictionary. They talk about 'salvation,' 'inspiration,' and the great words of the Christian faith, but they do not mean what we mean."

V. FALSE TEACHERS REBEL AND WILL LAND IN HELL

"their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep" (2 Peter 2:3b)

Their judgment was determined a long time ago and just because it has not yet come about does not mean that they are going to escape

CONCLUSION:

SO HOW WELL CAN YOU SMELL?

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) Can we really discern false teachers by examining their fruit? Why does it seem like false teachers attract such a large and willing following?
- 2) What are the implications of the phrase "*denying the Master who bought them*" on the doctrine of Limited vs Unlimited Atonement? Can we tell from the text whether these false teachers were actually saved or not?
- 3) Contrast the emphasis on "*swift destruction*" with our perception that the judgment often is a long time in coming. Is Peter saying that the judgment will very quickly follow the crime or is he saying that when it comes it will come swiftly and unannounced?
- 4) What examples of *greed* and *sensuality* and *exploitation* do we see around us today in the realm of religious false teachers?

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Herries: " A. The Exposure of the False Teachers (:1-3)

1. The Doom of the false teachers (:1) -- "*sudden destruction*"
2. The Conduct of the false teachers (:1) -- "*denying the Lord who bought them*"
3. The Influence of false teachers (:2,3) -- "*Many shall follow*"

Piper: " And now comes chapter two, and a very significant change in Peter's approach. I say a change in his approach, not his goal. His goal is still to make us firm and stable and unshakable in our faith. But his approach is very different. Chapter one is mainly an encouragement to avail ourselves of God's power to lead lives of godliness and love. Chapter two is mainly a warning against the destruction that will befall those who don't avail themselves of this power. If chapter one is the carrot, chapter two is the crack of the whip over our heads. There are no commands, no admonitions, no imperatives in chapter two; just pure, terrifying description of what will happen to those who fall prey to the false teachers in the church.

The main point of chapter two is expressed in four places. The last part of verse 1: '*those who deny the Master who bought them bring upon themselves swift destruction.*' The last part of verse 3: '*from of old their condemnation has not been idle, and their destruction has not been asleep.*' Verse 12: '*But these, like irrational animals, creatures of instinct, born to be caught and killed, reviling in matters of which they are ignorant, will be destroyed in the same destruction with them, suffering wrong for their wrongdoing.*' The last part of verse 17: '*For them the nether gloom of darkness has been reserved.*' The main point of the chapter is a warning that destruction awaits the false

teachers and their followers. Chapter two is the other side of the coin from what Peter said in 1:10,11. There he said, *'Be zealous to confirm your call and election, for if you do this you will never fall; so there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.'* Here in chapter two he says, if you contradict the doctrine and the character of God's elect, you will fall, and there will be no entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord, but instead eternal destruction in the gloom of hell."

Holwick: "Party Animals --

I. The World loves to party.

A. Christmas long noted for binges.

- 1) Puritans banned Christmas for this reason.
- 2) Great victory at Trenton due to drunk Hessians.
- 3) Tradition of spiked eggnog and wild office parties.

B. Ironic, in that it is a religious holiday.

- 1) Pursuit of pleasure is the religion of many people.
- 2) Many religious leaders are willing to take advantage of it.
- 3) Instead of religion changing us, we change the religion.

II. It's always been a racket. 2:1

A. Old Testament teaching on false prophets.

- 1) Counterparts to true prophets, and more common.
- 2) Generally the dominant force in Israel.
- 3) Test of a false prophet: Deut 18:20-22
 - a) Inaccurate. Predictions don't come true.
 - b) Heretical. Even when true, lead people away from God.
 - c) Immoral.

B. False teachers in Peter's day.

- 1) Destructive heresies. (against true doctrine) 2:1
 - a) Deny sovereign Lord. 2:1
 - 1> Examples of theological deniers:
 - 2> Or, they claim to be Christians but deny him by their actions.
 - b) Shameful ways. 2:2
 - 1> (English preacher and mistress / Lesbian preacher.)
 - A> Distressing to see in a preacher.
 - B> But what about laypeople? Double standards?
 - 2> Truth brought into disrespect.
- 2) Exploitation. 2:3
 - a) Motivated by greed.
 - b) Invented stories."

Ritchie: "The apostle goes on to list four characteristics of these false teachers. First, he

says, they will '*secretly introduce destructive heresies.*' Note they operate in secret (not out in the open), they are destructive (they do not build up), and What they teach is heresy (not the truth)...

The second characteristic of false teachers, according to Peter, is that they have a sensual lifestyle. They are preoccupied with gratifying their senses. They lack moral restraint, have no control over their sexual impulses. They care nothing for the judgment of God or man, but pervert the grace of God by justifying their sin...

Thirdly, the apostle says, false teachers discredit the way of truth. Jesus taught that he was '*the way, the truth and the life.*' To deny him as God come in the flesh and to deny his word is to depart from the truth. By so doing they bring discredit to the way of truth....

The fourth characteristic which the apostle points out is that the false teachers are motivated by greed. Their hearts are trained to trade. They are never satisfied but want more and more of what the world has to offer the lust of the flesh (power), the lust of the eyes (possessions), and the pride of life (position). According to Titus, these people 'teach things they should not teach, for the sake of sordid gain.'

Wiersbe: "[false teachers] simply lay their false teachings alongside the truth and give the impression that they believe the fundamentals of the faith. Before long, they remove the true doctrine and leave their false doctrine in its place."

Swindoll: "Let's summarize what we've learned to make it easier to remember.

Number one: False teachers appear to embrace orthodoxy and encourage you to think, but in reality it's a counterfeit message. They are deceitfully presenting heresy.

Number two: False teachers appear to stand firm on truth, but in reality it's a counterfeit stance. They're actually denying biblical truth.

Number three: False teachers appear to be those who love the doctrine of grace and our life of freedom for the glory of Christ, but it's a counterfeit grace. In reality, sensuality is being modeled and shameless lust is at work.

Number four: False teachers appear to have our good at heart, but theirs is a counterfeit sincerity. In reality, greed is their motivation."

Boyer: Summary of Chapter 2: Character and Description of False Teachers

1. They are apostates who falsely profess Christianity -- vv. 1,15
2. They are heretical, false teachers, denying the Lord -- v. 1
- not a major issue according to Peter's description; perhaps primarily in life.

3. They are harmful to believers, succeeding in leading many astray -- vv. 2,3,14,18-22
- need to distinguish between the false teachers and their victims
4. They are doomed to destruction -- vv. 1,3,4-10,12,13,14,17,19
- one of major points in Peter's presentation
5. They are audacious, self-willed, rebellious against authority -- vv. 10-11,12
6. They are morally wicked, sexually perverted -- vv. 9,12(?), 13,14,18
7. They are covetous; after money and personal advantage -- vv. 3,14,15
8. They are luxury-loving pleasure-seekers -- vs. 13
9. They are irrational (stupid) -- vv. 12,16
10. They are expert in use of words -- vv. 3,18
11. They are unsatisfying, disappointing; they promise, but don't deliver -- vv. 17,19

TEXT: 2 Peter 2:4-9

TITLE: *THE GUILLOTINE AND THE LIFELINE*

BIG IDEA: THE LORD KNOWS HOW TO RESERVE THE WICKED FOR JUDGMENT AND PRESERVE THE RIGHTEOUS FROM BEING POLLUTED

INTRODUCTION:

Key: The Lord knows what is going on; He is not unaware of the evil that is taking place -- even though to us it seems like there is no judgment; God has His own timing; He is able to protect His own and He is a faithful and righteous judge to punish the unrighteous. We can see from history how God has punished the ungodly; we can be certain that He will carry through on His threats of judgment.

cf. parallel passage in Jude

THE REALITY OF FUTURE JUDGMENT AND THE PRESERVATION OF THE RIGHTEOUS

I. (:4) EXAMPLE OF THE SINNING ANGELS - "God did not spare"

A. What Was Their Gross Sin?

"For if God did not spare angels when they sinned"

Somehow fallen angelic beings procreated with humans and produced a wicked generation (Gen. 6); They knew it was wrong and yet disobeyed anyway.

B. What Was Their Immediate Painful Punishment?

"but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness"

God has committed them to Tartarus = pits of darkness (place of punishment characterized by gloom and darkness). They are reserved for future punishment in God's timing.

C. What is the Certainty of Their Ultimate Eternal Punishment?

"reserved for judgment"

Lesson: If God punishes the angels (whom we cannot see), surely he will punish the wickedness around us which we see so clearly.

Piper: "Angels are the most glorious and mighty beings under God. But all their power and dignity was of no use when they sinned. God was unsparing in his sentence"

II. (:5) EXAMPLE OF JUDGMENT OF NOAH'S SINFUL GENERATION VS. PRESERVATION OF NOAH AND HIS FAMILY

"God did not spare ... but preserved"

A. What Was Their Gross Sin?

"and did not spare the ancient world"

God does not make decisions based on the will of the majority. Back in the days of Noah you had a whole generation of ungodly sinners:

"Now the earth was corrupt in the sight of God, and earth was filled with violence. And God looked on the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth."

B. What Was the Lifeline Thrown to Righteous Noah and His Family

"but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others"

God preserved Noah for that 120 year period when he had to endure the mocking and ridicule of his neighbors while he obeyed God in building the ark. Eventually the worldwide flood came. Only Noah and 7 others were safe inside the ark.

C. What Was the World's Immediate Painful Punishment?

"when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly"

Look at how the world likes to scoff now and deny the reality of a worldwide flood.

Lesson: Judgment comes swiftly and unexpectedly according to God's timetable and only the Righteous will be preserved.

III. (:6-8) EXAMPLE OF JUDGMENT OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH VS. PRESERVATION OF LOT

"He condemned ... He rescued"

God made an example of these ungodly cities; yet false teachers today persist in their immoral lifestyles, imagining that they will escape the long arm of God.

A. What Was Their Gross Sin?

"and if He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction"

same type of immoral behavior that was condoned by the false teachers

Green: "There are curious parallels between our contemporary scene and Sodom, for that city was as famed for its affluence and softness as for its immorality -- and, of course, like any men come of age, they thought they had outgrown the idea of God. They found out their mistake too late."

B. What Was Their Immediate Painful Punishment?

"by reducing them to ashes"

C. What Was the Intended Lesson from Such Severe Condemnation?

"having made them an example to those who would live ungodly thereafter"

D. What Was the Lifeline Thrown to Righteous Lot?

"and if He rescued righteous Lot"

Strikes us as unusual (given what we know about Lot) to see him characterized in this passage as *righteous*; The point is that God did not allow Lot to get swept away in the devastation; He held off the judgment until He had delivered Lot from the city.

E. How Bad Was the Conduct of the False Teachers? (How Severe Were the Temptations Faced by Lot?)

(described as parallel to that of the wicked men in the days of Noah and Lot)

1. Fleshly and Unprincipled

"oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men"

2. Lawless

"(for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day with their lawless deeds.)"

Ritchie: "Noah and Lot both lived in corrupt, ungodly societies. Both were forced to remain in the midst of temptation for a period, Noah for 120 years, while Lot lived (the word means 'he made permanent residence') in Sodom. At no time were they removed from their respective locations. Only when God had begun judging their societies were either of these men removed to safety. In the same way, the Christians in Asia Minor had to live in a corrupt society, being tempted to unfaithfulness, to follow false teachers and to believe the mockers who denied Christ's second coming. However Peter says, God would deliver them from the midst of temptation and personally return in power and glory to deliver them from ungodliness once and for all."

Green: "The licentious behaviour of the lawless society in which he lived *vexed* him, lit. 'knocked him up'. NEB catches the meaning with its translation 'tortured'. It is customary for Christians today, living in a secularized society, no longer to be shocked by sinful things which they see and hear. They will, for example, without protest sit through a television programme presenting material which a generation ago they would never have contemplated watching at a theatre or cinema. But when a man's conscience becomes dulled to sin, and apathetic about moral standards, he is no longer willing to look to the Lord for deliverance."

IV. (:9) PROVEN PRINCIPLE

A. THE LORD KNOWS HOW TO PRESERVE THE RIGHTEOUS FROM BEING POLLUTED

"the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation"

Why does God let so much damage be done to the Church, to His Bride? cf. the bad testimony resulting from the prominent downfall of TV preachers like Swaggart and Baker, etc.

Wuest (quoting **Strachan**): "The idea here is primarily of those surroundings that try a man's fidelity and integrity, and not of the inward inducement to sin, arising from the desires. Both Noah and Lot were in the midst of mockers, and unbelievers. This *peirasmos* (testing, temptation) is the atmosphere in which faith is brought to full development."

We have been given every resource for spiritual warfare that we need; we are fully equipped to handle the lies that are introduced, etc.;

How can people sit in church and be taught error and not question it?? 2 Reasons:

- 1) the false teachers tend to be DOMINATORS -- they come in almost like Kings (cf. OT warnings in Deut. about the abuses that will come from kings over Israel)
varying degrees of demonic control and charismatic influence
varying degrees of motivation by their own selfish lusts, etc.
plurality of elder structure should provide a check and balance against such abuse
Why do kids idolize sports heroes, movie stars, etc.?? the same thing happens in the church

- 2) the vast majority of believers are BLIND FOLLOWERS like dumb sheep --
we need to be checking out what we are taught like the Bereans
don't just get sucked up into the jetstream and swept along with the crowd

B. THE LORD KNOWS HOW TO RESERVE THE WICKED FOR JUDGMENT

"the Lord knows how to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment"

"*punishment*" = word for pruning; interesting concept here; cf. fruit trees -- need to be kept pruned in the first 4-5 years so that they don't bear fruit (because they would not be able to sustain the weight of the fruit); then you prune trees as they mature so that they would bear more fruit; Here God is seen pruning the false teachers to prepare them for just the perfect judgment He has waiting in store for them in His timing

CONCLUSION:

God is sovereign and in control; nothing can happen to us without God giving the OK.

The key to 2 Peter = 3:17-18: (Be on your guard and grow in grace...)

Believers are knocked down from their steadfastness because of:

- 1) they don't have enough of a solid doctrinal foundation to begin with
"knowing this beforehand..."

2) they have not been careful to guard the truth which they did know

We need to value the Scriptures supremely; Don't get bored being taught the Word -- Understand how desperately you need the Word; as newborn babes long for the pure milk of the Word; you can't get too much of it

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

1) Notice how it has become more and more in vogue to mock the concept of hell and future judgment. Why don't these examples create a sense of fear and forboding in the hearts of the ungodly?

2) How are the days in which we live similar to the evil times in which Noah lived?
- in terms of the type of sinful behavior, rebellion and immorality
- in terms of the attitude of people towards God
- in terms of a feeling of invincibility towards judgment

3) In what ways has God protected and delivered and rescued you from the types of trials and pressures associated with living in an ungodly culture?

4) How can Lot be called a "*righteous*" man here -- in light of what we know about his compromising lifestyle and poor decision making in the OT account?

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Herries: "HOW IS THE BELIEVER TO REMAIN TRUE TO THE WORD OF GOD?
Problem with dealing with false teachers: they are usually intellectually superior to their pupils. They often have the charisma of a strong personality and the skill of persuasion and teaching. Especially difficult in times like today when:

- age of skepticism
- all contemporaries ridicule the truths of Scripture
- morality and Christlikeness are considered outdated

Peter uses 2 illustrations from the OT to show that although man cannot save himself from false teachers by his own intellect or cunning, God does the saving.

A. Noah and his family (preacher of righteousness)

- Noah had nothing to fear even though all was against him. (:5)
- The world perished but God saved Noah and his family.

B. Lot saved out of twin cities noted for homosexuality (:6-7)"

Holwick:

"One against the tide.

- A. Judgment is not God's last word.
 - 1) Emphasis is on rescuing more than condemning.
 - 2) God always watches out for his own.

- B. The rescue of Noah.
 - 1) He remained faithful in midst of a sinning generation.
 - a) Most dangerous sin of all is conformity.
 - b) Easy to be the same; different is always difficult.

 - 2) In Jewish tradition, Noah was not only the one saved, but a righteous preacher to the lost.
 - a) He was concerned with the souls of others.
 - b) We have a duty to bring light to those in darkness.

 - 3) Is being a 'light' presumptuous of us?
 - a) Easy for Christians to be self-righteous.
 - b) Before we bring light, we have to have it ourselves.
 - c) We have a tendency to see sin in others very clearly, but our own, not at all.

- C. Rescue of Lot.
 - 1) Lot was distressed by evil around him.
 - a) Genesis reveals some flaws.
 - 1> He chose the easy life of the plain, over the wilderness.
 - 2> His family was influenced by surroundings.
 - A> He offered his daughters to the mob.
 - B> They had same morals, and got pregnant by him.
 - 3> He had to be dragged out by angel.
 - b) Yet Abraham considered Lot to be righteous.

 - 2) His surroundings tore up his soul.
 - a) Newman: 'Out great security against sin lies in being shocked at it.'
 - b) We tend to become too jaded with modern problems.
 - c) For good of world and our own souls, we must be sensitive and shockable."

Skoczalak:

BIG IDEA: HOW TO GUARD AGAINST FALSE TEACHERS GETTING A Foothold IN A HEALTHY CHURCH

REVIEW:

Peter knew that he only had a short time left to warn churches about how to

guard against false teachers getting a foothold after he was no longer around to protect them.

Study Characteristics of False Teachers from Jeremiah 23

- they destroy the flock (23:1)
- they scatter the sheep (instead of building up the flock)
- both prophet and priest are polluted (23:11)
- they lead you into futility (23:16)

2 Ways they do this:

- 1) introduce false doctrines
- 2) omit or neglect their shepherding duty; fail to confront sin when they see it; allow little things to go unchecked, which become bigger problems, etc.

2 Pet. 2:1-3 (last week)

- 1) Liars -- introducing false doctrines
- 2) Immoral lifestyle
- 3) Greedy -- their motivation = their own sordid gain

Key: Identify Servant Leadership as opposed to leaders who are making merchandise of you for their own gain

Problem today: nobody is interested in preserving True Doctrine anymore; instead people are all concerned about the ecumenical unity of believers. Their thinking is: Issues like Abortion are more important, so we should set aside our doctrinal barriers and band together to try to get some results on these bigger issues; Problem: they open the floodgates for even bigger issues to erode the solid foundation of the church; Truth is never worth nullifying because its compromise will lead to bigger problems;

People today are no longer steeped in the fundamentals of doctrine; therefore the warning signals don't go off when false doctrine is introduced; people are very susceptible to error

How is it that false teachers (who are liars, immoral, and greedy) can get any type of foothold at all in a healthy church?? How did it happen back in the days of Israel?? How does it happen today??

Probably not so easy in a real small group; but still possible if people are not guarding the truth

cf. example of families that used to be steadfast for the truth but now are way off course; How did this happen?"

Green: "Peter's examples differ slightly from those in the parallel account in Jude 5-7. Peter concentrates on the pride and rebellion of the angels, the apathy and disobedience of the men of Noah's day, and the sheer sensuality of the men of Sodom, presumably because these were all characteristic of the false teachers he was opposing."

TEXT: 2 Peter 2:10-16

TITLE: *DEPRAVED ... DANGEROUS ... AND DESTRUCTIVE*

BIG IDEA:

FALSE TEACHERS BLAZE A PATH OF DESTRUCTION AS THEY:

- PURSUE PERVERTED PLEASURES AND
- RESIST RIGHTEOUS RULE

(HOW TO IDENTIFY FALSE TEACHERS / HOW DANGEROUS ARE THEY?)

INTRODUCTION:

Cf. The many types of WARNINGS we come across in our day to day life:

1) Beware of Dog! -- I always notice these signs (sometimes they are fake -- just trying to scare you away)

2) Look at how many people still get struck down today with diseases like AIDS? It's not because they haven't been warned. There are plenty of information campaigns designed to educate people that they had better not share their needles with other drug addicts. They had better not engage in sinful sexual lifestyles. But the craving to indulge the flesh is stronger in them than the will to heed the warnings.

3) Warning on packages of cigarettes -- yet look how many young people still think it's cool to indulge in this filthy habit? Makes them feel like they are in control; statement of rebellion against their parent's authority

Not so cool when you see them on their deathbed bemoaning the lack of self-control and their failure to heed the clear warnings

3) cf. Warnings on ski slopes: Stay within the course; don't ski in the dangerous out of bounds areas

- Michael Kennedy
- Sonny Bono

But some people are especially daring; the thrill comes in pushing the envelope; Apparently they did not heed the warnings; Easy to brush aside the warnings; I am a good enough skier -- those warnings don't apply to me

Peter is spending a big chunk of time here Warning us about False Teachers

BEWARE OF FALSE TEACHERS:

WHAT THEY DO STEMS FROM WHO THEY ARE --

(HOW CAN I RECOGNIZE THEM?)

WHAT THEY DO LEADS TO WHERE THEY END UP --

(HOW DANGEROUS ARE THEY?)

chiastic arrangement -- WHAT DO THEY DO?

A B
B A

I. THEY PURSUE PERVERTED PLEASURES

"INDULGE THE FLESH IN ITS CORRUPT DESIRES:"

(a lot of parallels between ungodly, slick politicians and ungodly, deceitful false teachers)

A. HOW CAN I RECOGNIZE THEM? WHAT THEY DO STEMS FROM WHO THEY ARE

1. SHAMELESS:

DAYTIME CAROUSERS: They Flaunt their sin Openly

"they count it a pleasure to revel in the daytime"

it's bad enough to carouse in the nighttime; but to flaunt sin in the open daylight;

no conscience; no sense of right and wrong; what is appropriate behavior and what is not

Praising the evil conduct; Destruction of innocence; God doesn't want us to have intimate knowledge of evil; we are exposed to so much

Opposite of sober-minded

2. POLLUTED

"they are stains and blemishes" -- cf. The defilement of leprosy in the OT

God gave strict laws regarding separation -- gracious intention = to protect the purity of those who have not yet been defiled

should be burned out with laser treatment, not exalted and made into folk-heroes (like Hollywood types)

opposite of holiness

3. LUSTFUL

"having eyes full of adultery and than never cease from sin"

opposite of love

feel bad for Jimmy Carter -- cf. Newspaper article this past week detailing the sexual misconduct of our past presidents -- men in our higher office who indulged the flesh in its corrupt desires; who were not faithful in their marriage relationship; who had eyes full of adultery and acted on their desires;

Job 31:1 *"I have made a covenant with my eyes; How then could I gaze at a virgin"*

difficult in our graphical multimedia society where we are constantly bombarded with immodest images

4. DECEPTIVE

"enticing unstable souls"

opposite of truth (openness, honesty)

always a hidden agenda; hypocrites; misrepresenting their beliefs; packaging things up with the craftiness of a marketing ad agency

5. GREEDY

"having a heart trained in greed"

can never be content -- always longing after more money, more possessions, more pleasures;

Opposite of Contentment -- means they live a life where they know no peace

B. HOW DANGEROUS ARE THEY? WHAT THEY DO LEADS TO WHERE THEY END UP

DESTINY: ACCURSED CHILDREN VS. the blessing of being the children of God

They erode God's standard of Holiness -- if these leaders are doing these things, it must be OK; God doesn't seem to be judging them

They dull your consciences -- happens a little bit at a time so you don't notice

They pollute you; a little leaven leavens the whole lump -- don't think you can escape

They entice you -- make sin look attractive -- Satan is a great counterfeiter

these people don't come to you looking like nasty wolves, but like innocent sheep;

they don't have red letters on their forehead saying: Danger, Beware of false teachers

They manipulate you and exploit you in their deception and greed

like the blind leading the blind, They cause you to leave the straight and narrow and end up with them in the pit of destruction

You need to examine what they teach; you need to evaluate what they do; you need to determine Who They Are

Character is important; the qualifs for elders cannot be minimized or excused away;

cf. The acceptance rating of President Clinton -- hard to imagine that people don't think character affects leadership ability -- What will a church put up with??

WHAT DO THEY DO #2 (in addition to Pursuing Perverted Pleasures)

II. THEY RESIST RIGHTEOUS RULE

"DESPISE AUTHORITY:"

A. HOW CAN I RECOGNIZE THEM? WHAT THEY DO STEMS FROM WHO THEY ARE

1. DARING

good to take risks that involve stepping out in faith and trusting God;
bad to presume against God's goodness and be reckless in your behavior;
cf. Evil Knievel stunts -- Who would ever think of even trying such stunts??
Not inhibited by God's standards of righteousness and holiness

They Resist Righteous Rule
whatever happened to being sober-minded?
(closely tied to #3 -- no fear of God)

2. SELF-WILLED

"I did it my way" -- admired as the aggressive way to assert yourself
cf. Condemnation in Jer. 23 of prophets who were not sent from God; who did
not have a message from God, but who spoke their own dreams and
visions from their own initiative

denying the rule of the Lord who bought them (vs. 1)

they despise authority

check out their relationship to their parents

check out how they were able to submit to authority at secular jobs

check out their submission to their church leaders in other situations

this is why they hate the checks and balances of a true plurality of elder type of
govt.; they want to hold the reins of power themselves;
they want everyone to agree to their agenda and follow their leadership

3. NO FEAR OF GOD

cf. "No Fear" T-shirts; whole attitude of rebellion of teens portrayed in TV
commercials

1) they do not tremble when they revile angelic majesties ("glories") -- mysterious
cf. The glories of the Second Coming of Christ to establish His Kingdom on
earth;

by application: applies to how they spoke against apostolic authority, etc.

very dangerous how we speak about the authorities God has appointed
Not our job to go around spouting out reviling judgments -- we have not been
called to a ministry of cursing others (even where it is justified)

We need to point out error (not judge motives that we can't see) -- but not act
like the sons of thunder calling down God's judgment where we should
be pleading and praying for mercy and repentance

2) angels would never dare to do the same against the false teachers
even though the angels are greater in might and power
cf. Caution of Michael the archangel in dealing with Satan -- leaves judgment
and
condemnation up to the Lord (Jude 9)

4. UNREASONING ANIMALS = CREATURES OF INSTINCT

argument against evolution: we are not just a small step above monkeys
unable to think logically based on long term consequences of their actions
their God is their stomach -- driven by the lusts of the flesh

Piper: "Verse 12 adds that the false teachers are like animals in two senses. First, they are utterly ignorant of what they speak. Their reviling at the glories of Christ is like a wolf howling at the sunrise. And, second, they will be destroyed like the animals. They will come to an end in judgment and all their howling will be silenced. We are admonished, therefore, to beware of spiritual pride."

B. HOW DANGEROUS ARE THEY? WHAT THEY DO LEADS TO WHERE THEY END UP

"DESTINED FOR DESTRUCTION = SUFFERING WRONG AS THE WAGES OF DOING WRONG"

should be no surprise as to their outcome
The Harvest Law

This is the transition back to Point #1

III. (:15-16) EXAMPLE OF BOTH THESE TRAITS = ERROR OF BALAAM -- FORSAKING THE RIGHT WAY, THEY HAVE FOLLOWED THE WAY OF BALAAM

"WHO LOVED GAIN FROM WRONGDOING"
INDULGE THE FLESH
DESPISE AUTHORITY

Apostasy theme = forsaking the right way which they once held
Apostates: started out with a sound foundation, but depart from the faith (which they never held to internally)

that's how the first century church could so quickly degenerate into error
cf. Every major mainline denomination; every major seminary -- track its history

False teachers creep in unawares and corrupt what is good

Findings from Archaeology:

Historical Context:

Important Principle:

Balaam taught Balak this principle:

"If you can't get God to change His mind about blessing Israel, then devise a plan to get God's people to change their hearts about God"

Rev. 2:14 *"who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, that they might eat food sacrificed to idols and practice immorality"*

What's the big deal here?

Cf. Samson: What's the big deal if I allow them to cut off my hair

Cf. Achan: What's the big deal if I take some of the gold and hide it in my tent?

Cf. Saul: What's the big deal if I don't follow out God's commands to the letter?

Cf. Ananias: What's the big deal if I misrepresent my offering and pretend to be super-spiritual?

CONCLUSION:

False prophets have no chance of wrecking the program of God;
no way Balaam could successfully curse Israel

the gates of hell are not able to stand against God's purposes and plan for history and for His elect people

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DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

1) Think of as many different *warning signs* as you can. What makes these warnings effective? How seriously do you take these warnings? What are the consequences of not heeding these warnings? How does that apply to these warnings about the dangers and destructiveness of the depraved false teachers?

2) Where do I find myself *indulging the flesh* instead of being disciplined according to godliness?

3) In what ways does our culture promote the *despising of authority* as opposed to cultivating the fear of God? What type of stand do I take for righteousness?

4) Read the OT account of *Balaam* in Numbers 22-24. What do you learn about the depraved character of the false teachers from their mentor?

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Herries: THE REASON FALSE TEACHERS CAUSE SUCH DEVASTATING EFFECTS IS BECAUSE OF THEIR PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS --

Peter mentions 8 such characs.:

(not all false teachers have all 8, but they all have some of them)

A. Subtle -- they privately bring in damnable heresies

Lit.: *"he will secretly introduce destructive choices"*

B. Sensual -- *"many shall follow their immoral ways"*

some years ago the theological world began to discuss Existentialism =

it was a theory that tickled the fancies of the intellectual. It said

that the only basis for truth was experience. "Whatever I feel is right

is right for me." Denied the Bible as the authority for right and

wrong. No longer believed in objective truth and standards.

Soon this error worked its way down to layman's language and lifestyle

so that today a man and woman say we can do as we feel we should --

no moral standards.

Where did all this begin? false teachers with pernicious (immoral) ways

C. Greedy -- cf. example of Balaam from Numbers 22 (2 Peter 2:14-16)

1. Balaam never cursed Israel although he desired to do so because of vast sum of money offered by the enemy

2. Balaam persuaded Israel to worship Baal and pursue the women of Moab.

This brought God's punishment on them.

3. In being this kind of false teacher, he accepted money from the enemy

D. Despise Authority

E. Self-willed

F. Revile or cause others to Blaspheme God

G. Message they preach is Meaningless (made up by themselves)

H. Dishonest

Ritchie: " Not a whole lot has changed in the intervening 2,000 years. False teachers still strive to introduce destructive heresies into the church. For example, Sun Myung Moon, the founder of the Unification Church, was raised in a Presbyterian church. Km Jones, founder of the People's Temple, was raised in a Nazarene church. He once pastored an interdenominational church, and before he founded his own movement pastored a Disciples of Christ church. Moses David, founder of the Children of God, was born to evangelical parents and was a pastor of the Missionary Alliance Church. Victor Paul Weirwille, founder of The Way, was a pastor of the Reformed Church and a professor of New Testament at a leading Christian college. Mary Baker Eddy, founder of the church of Christian Science, was raised in an orthodox Christian home. Charles Taze Russell, the founder of the Jehovah's Witnesses, was raised in an orthodox Christian home and attended orthodox Christian churches. All of these people strayed from the Christian faith as it is taught by the prophets in the Old Testament,

revealed in the person of Christ, God incarnate who came and walked among us, and of which his apostles wrote in the New Testament. As a result, we today are reaping the bitter harvest of their heresy and error."

Piper: "In verses 10b-13a the focus is on the brazen willfulness and pride and self-sufficiency of the false teachers. In verses 13b-16 the focus is on their unashamed indulgence in sex and their love of money. In verse 17 the emptiness of their teaching is exposed. And in verses 18-22 Peter warns how these false teachers entice new and unstable Christians into moral apostasy where their last condition is worse than if they had never known the way of righteousness"

Lillie: "In that portrait we may say that there are four features especially prominent: the denial of Christ, sensuality, greed, and a profane, arrogant lawlessness in speech and act; while throughout the whole the very darkest colors are used, and the horror of the canvas is lighted only by the intermingling fires of wrath..."

Now the story of Balaam presents a very similar combination of impurity, low ambition, and Divine rebuke and retribution. Looked up to as a prophet by those among whom he dwelt, he set himself, under the influence of the most sordid motives, to tempt the people of God into sin -- the kindred sins of idolatry and uncleanness -- and thereby led them into trouble, and brought ruin on himself. The Apostle, having just spoken of the covetousness of the false teachers, points especially to that same trait in the character of Balaam, '*who loved the wages of unrighteousness,*' and for the sake of them suppressed his own better convictions, and as it were forced God to let him follow, at least to some extent, the crooked way of his own heart.

Not, however, without continued warning and resistance: '*but was rebuked for his iniquity,*' or '*had a reproof of his own transgression*'; he who passed among his people as an oracle of heaven, and their reprover and guide. And how wondrously was that reproof adapted to the conviction and humiliation of a man who seems to have been favored with frequent direct communications from the living and true God! ...

Says **Calvin:** "It was a horrible judgment of God, that the Angel revealed himself to an ass sooner than to the prophet; that an ass, perceiving God opposed, durst not advance farther, but rather recoiled, when the prophet, under the blind impulse of his avarice, and in the face of a clear Divine prohibition, was rushing on. For the final answer which he received, that he might go, was less a permission than a mark of the Divine displeasure. Finally, it was to his extreme dishonor that the mouth of the ass was opened, so that she might be the teacher of the man who had been unwilling to submit himself to the authority of God. By this prodigy, moreover, the Lord would show what a monstrous thing it is, to change the truth into a lie."

TEXT: 2 Peter 2:17-22 John Cobb

TITLE: *PIGS IN THE PREACHER PEN*

BIG IDEA:

FALSE TEACHERS LURE OTHERS INTO THEIR FILTHY PIT BY PROMISING WHAT THEY CAN'T DELIVER

INTRODUCTION:

Original poem = a spoof of "Mary had a little lamb"; speaking of the wolf in sheep's clothing that devoured the other sheep that were trapped in the sheepfold and helpless

I. (:17a) THEIR IDENTITY --WHO ARE THESE FALSE TEACHERS?

A. "*springs without water*" -- cf. culture where finding water was very important
you look for these teachers to provide help for your soul; but they have nothing to offer; promises something valuable but fails to deliver

B. "*mists driven by a storm*" -- tornado, hurricane -- cf. loud rushing roar (like a locomotive) announcing the arrival of this great storm; imagine a farmer out on his porch waiting expectantly for the rainshowers that would enable him to save his crop and repay his loans; he hardly even gets wet from the mist that passes by; what a disappointment

II. (:17b) THEIR DESTINY -- WHERE ARE THEY HEADED?

"for whom the black darkness has been reserved" -- gloomy darkness

Illustration: "Motel Slicks Commercial" (spoof of Motel 6 and Tom Burdette) -- all sorts of people check into this motel (fallen angels; wicked generation of Noah's day; Sodom and Gomorrah; false prophets; etc.); they check in and are never able to check out -- "We'll leave the lights out..."

these false teachers already have their reservations for such a place

II. (:18) THEIR SENSUALITY -- HOW DO THEY OPERATE?

"*For*" -- giving an explanation of vs. 17

A. Big Talkers

"speaking out arrogant words of vanity"
great swelling words = big empty words
flattery, pride, empty promises

B. Fleshly Appeal

"they entice by fleshly desires, by sensuality"

luring someone in by using bait; using their position to manipulate and get what they want

C. Deceptive Exploitation

"those who barely escape from the ones who live in error"

they prey on the weak and the vulnerable

Lenski: "The special victims of these vicious deceivers are the newly converted: *'those just escaping from those conducting themselves in error,'* i.e., from the Gentiles living around them. The A. V. has translated with an aorist: 'those that were clean escaped'; but the participle is a descriptive present: new converts just escaping. It makes no difference whether *oligow* is regarded as temporal or as local; the R. V.'s 'just escaping' has reproduced the correct idea. These new converts are just getting away from the old pagan life of their neighbors and associates. On such converts that are still tender, are not yet mature, strong, trained to defend themselves, these monsters pounce and by words, swelling and extravagant, such as no true teacher would dream of using, allure and dazzle their victims by telling them that they can be true Christians, yea, the best kind of Christians and yet indulge their lusts by excesses of the flesh. Can you think of anything more damnable?"

III. (:19) THEIR SLAVERY -- WHAT IS THEIR MESSAGE?

A. False Promises of Freedom

"promising them freedom"

cf. the health and wealth gospel -- Sounds attractive what they have to offer; but they can't deliver!

B. Harsh Reality = Slaves to Corruption

"while they themselves are slaves of corruption"

that is all that they can pass on no matter how pleasant they package up their message and make it sound attractive

C. Essence of Freedom vs Slavery

"for by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved"

note use of Perfect tense here for verbs: "overcome", "enslaved" -- happened in the past with abiding results

IV. (:20-22) THEIR DEGRADATION -- HOW BAD OFF ARE THEY?

A. Apostasy from Holiness is Worse Than Ignorance of the Truth

1. Initial Superficial Response to the Truth

"For if after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ"

2. Subsequent Apostasy from Holiness and Bondage to Evil
"they are again entangled in them and are overcome"
3. Evaluation of Their Hopeless Condition
"the last state has become worse for them than the first"
4. Principle of Greater Judgment Based on Greater Light
"For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment delivered to them."

B. Two Examples of Their Degradation

"It has happened to them according to the true proverb"

1. *"A dog returns to its own vomit"*
2. *"A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire"*

worse than before they were acquainted with the truth
not talking about the possibility of losing your salvation

cf. Luke 11:24-26

they have been cleaned up superficially for a short time, but no heart change; now they are in Big Trouble because they no longer have any fear of God and are just interested in living how they please

vs.21 -- they went to "greeduate" school
didn't get their Master of Divinity; but instead got mastered by corruption

we started off with a Pig; scrubbed him up and made him presentable; put him in the pulpit; put a diploma on his wall along with some other impressive credentials; but never changed his nature

Look at all the damage just 1 wolf can do in a sheepfold that is not protected

APPLICATIONS:

- 1) Don't flirt with borderline temptations -- put sin decisively behind you; don't mess with it even a little bit
- 2) Don't be discouraged when you see sensuality seemingly rewarded -- they have their reservations in the gloomy darkness
- 3) Try to offer help to the weak and vulnerable so they are not suckered in by such charismatic leaders

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DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) Why do so many people respond to form over substance ("*springs without water*")? Do you have the discernment to poke holes in the "*arrogant words of vanity*" that promise but don't deliver?
- 2) How cautious are we to preserve moral purity in our own lives -- especially in light of the fact that *sensuality* is usually one of the devil's favorite paths of temptations to try to gain a foothold?
- 3) Is there anything that has *enslaved us* where we still need the Lord's deliverance to experience the freedom that should be ours as His children?
- 4) Can you build a powerful argument from this passage that the gospel should firmly plant us into a life of *holiness* rather than just an intellectual change of mind about who Jesus is?

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Holwick:

- A. Can a Christian lose salvation? 2:20-22
 - 1) False teachers seem to be described as Christians.
 - a) They have "escaped corruption." 2:20
 - b) They have "known the way of righteousness." 2:21
 - 2) Yet something is wrong - they still have unchanged nature.
 - a) Pigs and dogs - "unclean," cleaned, but never clean.
 - b) Going to church doesn't make you a Christian.
- B. "Almost" Christians are in greatest danger.
 - 1) We must make a clean break with our past.
 - 2) We must avoid re-entanglement. Matt 12:45

Ritchie: "They can't escape the shackles of their old life. Having gotten rid of their internal corruption, they find themselves returning to it again. Thirdly, he says, like pigs after washing, they '*return to wallowing in the mire.*' They return again to the external corruption which they once had. What graphic terms Peter uses! Washing a pig does not change its heart; he still remains a pig. In the same way, a false prophet will always remain that, no matter how flattering his words, no matter how well he dresses."

Wiersbe: "The apostates offer freedom to their converts, and this 'bait' entices them to abandon the true faith and follow the false teachers. The teachers promise them liberty, but this promise is never fulfilled; the unstable converts only find themselves in terrible

bondage. The freedom offered is a false freedom."

Green: "Covetousness, sophistical arguments, pride in knowledge, gluttony, drunkenness, lust, arrogance against authority of all kinds, and, most of all, the danger of denying the lordship of the Redeemer -- are these not all the paramount temptations of money-mad, sex-mad, materialistic, anti-authoritarian, twentieth-century man?"

Clark: Re vs. 22 -- "This final verse, part of which comes from Proverbs 26:11, concluding the denunciation of the false teachers, rather clearly indicates that they had never been regenerated. When it speaks of a dog's returning to his own vomit and a sow to the mire, the implication is that these acts are natural to dogs and pigs. They have never been anything else than dogs and pigs, even though for a time they might have been cleaned up externally. Hence the false teachers had never been Christians and the verse does not teach that a regenerated person can become unregenerated."

Swindoll: "One of the world's best known maxims was penned by the poet laureate of England -- Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

'Tis better to have loved and lost

Than never to have loved at all.'

That may be so with love and romance, but it's not with knowledge and truth. It's *not* better to have heard the truth and turned from it than never to have known the truth at all. In other words, as Peter will explain, ignorance is better than apostasy."

TEXT: 2 Peter 3:1-9

TITLE: PROMISEKEEPER

BIG IDEA:

**THE WORD OF GOD WILL DELIVER ON ITS PROMISES IN ACCORDANCE WITH GOD'S TIMETABLE --
IT ALWAYS HAS
IT ALWAYS WILL**

SCRIPTURE READING: THE PROMISE OF THE RETURN OF JESUS:

2 Peter 1:4 *"He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises"*
so that we might live holy lives

John 14:1-3 *"I will come again and receive you to Myself"*
we will not be homeless; we are pilgrims now

John 14:18 *"I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you"*
we will not be lonely; bereft of family

John 14:27-28 *"I will come to you"* -- we should be filled with peace and joy; not fear and anxiety

Acts 1:11 *"This Jesus will come in just the same way "*

2 Peter 3:1-9 Raise your hand when you hear: (shows the emphasis of the passage)
"Word of God"
"Commandment"
"Promise"

INTRODUCTION:

One important aspect of being a good Dad is keeping our promises. Our goal is to model as best we can the relationship of our Heavenly Father to His children. If we break our promises, we wreck that picture because God never breaks His promises. Sometimes things happen that are out of our control that make it impossible for us to keep a time commitment. But with God, everything is in His control and He always comes through and keeps His Word.

At Issue in this passage: THE PROMISE OF THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

Piper: "In chapter one, verse 16 Peter had already taken the offensive against the denial of the second coming. He said, *'We did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made*

known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.' That is, Christ certified to us that he was indeed going to return in bodily glory, by revealing to us the glory of his transformed body in a preview on the mount of transfiguration."

**THE WORD OF GOD WILL DELIVER ON ITS PROMISES IN
ACCORDANCE WITH GOD'S TIMETABLE --
IT ALWAYS HAS
IT ALWAYS WILL**

I don't usually like to give away my Outline at the beginning; I like to keep you in suspense. But today I am going to give you my 5-point Outline; I have something for you to hold on to; when I ask you to, you need to raise it high in the air so that everyone can see it and remember that outline point;

- 1) Stuffed Elephant
- 2) Stuffed Mocking Bird
- 3) Globe
- 4) Matches
- 5) Alarm Clock

**I. (:1-2) THE WORD OF GOD DESERVES OUR ATTENTION
(ELEPHANT)**

(THE PRIORITY OF THE WORD OF GOD AND ESPECIALLY GOD'S PROMISES) -- Review

- A. We need to be stirred up to remember all that God has promised
remember the picture of stirring up the hot chocolate?
we tend to be a forgetful people -- Christian Amnesia
- B. God's message is clear and consistent as it has been delivered down through the ages:
by the holy prophets -- the writings of the OT prophets
the commandment of the Lord and Savior Himself
the communication of those same promises by the apostles

(the Second Coming was a favorite theme of the apostle Peter -- cf. 1 Peter: 1:5,7,10-13; 4:7,13; 5:1,4)

Are we giving God's Word the Attention it deserves?
Are we stirring up our memories to hold on to the truth despite false teachers?

Ritchie: "Peter says his ministry to these Christians in Asia Minor is one of '*stirring up [their] sincere minds by way of reminder.*' He is reminding them of truth they already know, stirring up their pure minds about the things of God. Imagine the apostle stirring up a pot of thick soup, scraping up the bottom so that the chunks of meat and vegetables

are mixed in with the broth. In the same way he is for the second time writing to stir up these believers' minds to remember truth they had already been exposed to. These people were living in a corrupt society. They had just abandoned corrupt mystery religions, and now they had to contend with corrupt teachers who introduced destructive heresies among them, and mockers who held there would be no second coming of Christ. Peter's response to all of this is to remind them of the word spoken by God about such people."

II. (:3-4) THE WORD OF GOD COMES UNDER CONSTANT ATTACK (MOCKING BIRD)

(spend most of our time here)

Peter does not want us to be surprised by such attacks

"*in the last days*" = the time period that began with Christ's First Coming so that now we are eagerly awaiting His return at any time
don't lose the force of this

"*mockers following after their own lusts*"

physical appetites: gluttons = eat too much; drunkards = eat too much; perverted in how they act;

also follow after the lust for material possessions (greed)

the lust for power and honor

the connection is always there between immoral living and false doctrine;
these people have no fear of God and live ungodly to fulfill the lusts of the flesh;
have no expectation of the Lord coming at any time to hold them accountable;
no self-control; no Holy Spirit restraint

present themselves as very sophisticated; very intelligent;
believe that man determines his own destiny and is in control of his own life;
independent of God; progressing on the path of social evolution -- getting better and better

"*Where is the promise of His coming?*" -- making fun of the promises of God

Where's the Beef?

Show me the money?

You have warned me about my immoral living and coming judgment; but I don't see it happening

cf. How they mocked Jesus at His trial and when He was on the cross

You say you are the King of the Jews -- save yourself!

"*since the fathers fell asleep*" = those to whom the promise had been made in the past;
goes all the way back to the OT patriarchs like Abraham;

cf. Heb. 11:13 *"All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth"*

kosmos = a system where order prevails

UNIFORMITARIANISM = everything stays the same always;
the foundation doctrine for any type of world view that likes to leave God out of the equation:

the present processes of nature which we can observe are all there is to reality both in the past and in the future

1) The World View of the Evolutionist and the Secular Scientist

No Creation; no special significance to man; no ACCOUNTABILITY to God
cf. Dating methods are based on this view

2) The World View of the Secular Historian

God has no plan for History; there is no second coming of Christ; no kingdom plan; no new heavens and new earth; History is heading nowhere; No URGENCY vs. "His Story"

3) The World View of the Environmentalist

let's devote our life to protecting the natural resources around us; we are one with Mother Earth; this is a world that is reserved for destruction by fire!

God is not so concerned that we defend His Word against all these attacks
(sometimes that is appropriate and necessary)

God is always concerned that we believe His Word and Rest on His Promises

Application: Where do we tend to doubt God's promises?? Importance of testimonies
What He's done for others He'll do for you

Hoke: "[Uniformitarianism] is a closed-system model of the universe which does not have room for divine intervention in the space-time continuum. It is the result of the prideful thinking of man without God. It has no room for a creation, for supernatural or miraculous occurrences, or for a Second Coming and judgment which brings history, as we know it, to a close. Prideful thinking exalts the intellect. Next we need to see that prideful thinking makes judgments without all the facts. For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God the . . ."

**III. (:5-6) THE WORD OF GOD HAS PROVED ITS SUPERNATURAL
POWER IN THE PAST
(GLOBE)**

mockers don't want to allow for the intervention of God or the supernatural into any aspect of their life;
they shut their eyes to the bare facts of history:
(talk about having your head buried in the sand)

A. CREATION -- THE POWER OF GOD'S WORD IN CREATION AND BLESSING

the universe was created by the Word of God -- that blows away the lie of Evolution

B. NOAH'S FLOOD -- THE POWER OF GOD'S WORD IN JUDGING AND DESTROYING

God is not so removed as to allow this world to continue on unchanged; He has already destroyed the world once with water

No possibility of local flood view here

Lesson: this is a moral universe; sin will not go unpunished forever

TRANSITION:

you don't find any mockers in the day of Noah as the flood waters are rapidly rising; as the torrential downpour refuses to let up; as people cling to the tops of trees waiting their inevitable fate; You won't find any mockers when Christ returns in Judgment; instead every knee will bow and every tongue will confess the truth of God's Word and the Lordship of His person -- but it will be too late then

IV. (:7) THE WORD OF GOD WILL BRING CATASTROPHIC JUDGMENT IN THE FUTURE

(MATCHES)

"reserved for fire"

THE WORD OF GOD WILL DELIVER ON ITS PROMISES -- you can count on that

fire and brimstone preaching never outdated; cannot be just an aberration of the stern Puritans;

V. (:8-9) THE WORD OF GOD WILL SEE FULFILLMENT ACCORDING TO GOD'S TIMETABLE

(ALARM CLOCK)

the mockers might miss the boat and overlook the obvious, but the beloved need to understand the facts:

"slack" -- idea of tardiness -- cf. Getting here late on Sunday morning

God created time -- His perspective towards time is different than ours; He stands above it

The present delay is not due to any failure on God's part (not due to lack of power or laziness), but rather to His mercy and grace
In fact it can only be called a delay when viewed from our limited perspective --
certainly no grounds for doubting the fulfillment of the promise

The Word of God will Deliver on Its Promises --

It always has

It always will

that's one reason the Promises of God are so Precious

Hold up our outline symbol objects:

- 1) Stuffed Elephant
- 2) Stuffed Mocking Bird
- 3) Globe
- 4) Matches
- 5) Alarm Clock

Benediction: 1 Thess. 5:23-24

"Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is FAITHFUL, who also will do it" -- despite what the mockers of this age might like to think -- AMEN

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) What lessons should modern day mockers learn from the historical data of the Creation of the world and the Flood? Do we firmly believe that God is in control of history and intervenes at any time at His discretion or have we embraced Uniformitarianism ourselves?
- 2) What were some of the OT prophecies of the Second Coming that Peter probably pointed his readers to by way of reminder? Have we overlooked these passages or are we getting the full benefit from them?
- 3) Are we as patient and longsuffering towards the mockers we encounter as God is? Do we marvel at the mercy of God and extend that mercy towards others? Are we faithful to perform our task as preachers of righteousness even as Noah did?
- 4) What group of people is in view in verse 9 where Peter talks about God being *patient toward you*?

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Holwick:

" Rev. David Holwick
First Baptist Church
Ledgewood, New Jersey
December 25, 1994

CHRISTMAS DAY

2 Peter 3:1-9

WOULD YOU HAVE BELIEVED?

I. How real was Christmas?

A. If we had been tourists there, what would it have been like?

- 1) Shepherds - realistic, even likely.
- 2) Star - we wouldn't be able to tell a new one, we see so few here in New Jersey.
- 3) Angels - a little tougher. We don't experience them on a regular basis, especially not gobs of them at once.
- 4) A little baby in a feeding trough.
 - a) Not impressive at all.
 - b) Would we have appreciated the significance?

B. Those who notice, are aware.

- 1) Not everyone believed the first time.
 - a) The original manger was not a crowded scene.
 - b) Even as he grew up, Jesus did not gain large numbers.
 - 1> He did get popular as a celebrity, for a while.
 - 2> But true believers were few and far between.
 - c) We can only guess our response, since we are after fact.
- 2) How many believe in the second visit?
 - a) Jesus Christ is coming back.
 - b) When? That's always been the issue.
 - c) Would you be ready? Are you ready NOW?

II. Our thinking needs to be stimulated.

3:1

A. Wholesome thinking.

- 1) Prophecy is not intended to lead to escapism.
 - a) It happened even back then, but they were rebuked.
 - b) God wants us involved and forward-looking.
- 2) The renewal of our minds is the key to Christian growth.
 - a) God's perspective is different from world's.
 - b) "Wholesome" refers to positive, life-affirming thought.

B. Recall the words.

3:2

- 1) "It is not sufficiently considered that men more frequently

require to be reminded than informed"

Dr. Samuel Johnson

- 2) Recall the words the prophets, and of Jesus through the apostles.
 - a) Note that OT and NT are considered a unity.
 - b) Best way to recall them, is to READ them.
 - c) (A study of prophecy first got me into Bible.)

III. Last-day scoffers.

3:3

A. Skepticism is nothing new.

- 1) Our scientific mindset has its roots in ancient Greece.
- 2) To non-believers, Jesus's promises seem pretty hokey.

The liberal commentator Donald Kaul loves the Second Coming as much as he does Newt Gingrich. (not much)

In one column in 1991 he mentioned how he was approached by a Christian.

He said the pleasant woman handed him a pamphlet.

He thanked her, and read:

"In the near future, many Christians will suddenly disappear from the Earth."

Right away that got Kaul's attention.

Good news always does that to him, he added.

The pamphlet continued:

"Such a wonderful event is called 'Rapture,'

There will be quite a confusion in the world after Rapture:

The families left behind will look for a large number of vanished people.

The mass media will be busy with reporting this mysterious event."

Kaul imagined the headlines:

"Religious Right Disappears, National IQ Surges."

He then added,

"But don't imagine that The Rapture will leave the rest of us sinners free to run around and have a good time, unencumbered by the harsh looks, to say nothing of laws, thrown our way by the virtuous.

After The Rapture comes Seven Years of Tribulation, which will entail drought, hail, war, earthquakes, volcanic explosions, famines, plagues and "big disasters from heaven."

Kaul thought this sounded a lot like California.

It's interesting that Kaul feels morally restricted by

Christians.

Peter himself says a big motivation of the scoffers is that they want to follow their own evil desires.

#1652

B. The Second Coming is not something made up by Fundamentalists.

- 1) Jesus's own words predict it.
 - a) If they are wrong, then he is wrong.
 - b) Jesus even predicted people would like he was taking to long to come back. Matt 24:28; 25:5,19
- 2) Churches which ignore his prophecies are shortchanging the gospel.
 - a) The Second Coming is a major emphasis in the NT.

C. Uniformitarianism - nothing changes. 3:3

- 1) According to book of Ecclesiastes, it is a typically worldly perspective. Eccl 1:9-10
- 2) Scientists have used it to reject any catastrophic events on the earth.
 - a) If we don't observe something happening now, it could not have happened in the past.

IV. God did it before, he'll do it again. 3:5

A. Sudden Creation of heaven and earth.

- 1) Only God is eternal: our universe was created at a distinct time in the past.
- 2) Even scientists are coming around to this: Big Bang theory.
 - a) Previously scientists believed in an infinite and timeless universe.
 - b) Only in last ten years has Big Bang gained acceptance.
 - 1> This year's COBE results, and Hubble data.
 - 2> Contrasts with steady state view of philosophers.
 - c) Doesn't mean God HAD to do creation this way, but indicates even scientists now see a finite universe.

B. Sudden flood of the earth. 3:6

- 1) Almost all ancient societies have stories of a huge flood.
- 2) Even scientists have had to acknowledge catastrophic events in the past.
 - a) Huge crater discovered in Yucatan, Mexico.
 - b) Buried impact zone caused by asteroid that probably caused extinction of majority of earth's life forms.
- 3) Meaning of flood: God is not only Creator, but Judge.
 - a) Jesus makes the same point. Matt 24:37-39
 - b) God doesn't just work on the individual level, he can judge the whole world.

- C. Future, sudden burning of earth. 3:7
- 1) Another judgment, just as certain, is coming in the future.
 - 2) "Reserved for fire" is uncomfortably close to nuclear warfare.
 - a) God doesn't have to use nukes.
 - b) But it is disconcerting that we could do this ourselves.
 - 3) History is not open-ended: God will bring a conclusion.

V. When?

- A. The timing of the Second Coming has always been a controversy.
- 1) The timing of the First Coming was just as debated.
 - a) Some Jews thought it would be soon.
 - b) Others expected it in tens of thousands of years.
 - 2) The uncertainty of date-setting discourages many.

Remember when Donald Kaul was given that pamphlet about the Rapture?

One thing that really grabbed him is that it told precisely when The Rapture was going to happen: October 1992. It didn't.

In spite of Jesus's own warnings, Christians have been setting dates for centuries.

And so far, they've always been wrong.

Because they have been wrong so often, even good-hearted people have become skeptical.

- B. God's perspective on time.
- 1) Day can equal ten thousand years. Ps 90:4; 2 Pet 3:8

Conversation between God and a young boy:

Boy to God: "Is it true that one trillion dollars is like 10 dollars to you?"

God to boy: "Yes, my son."

Boy to God: "It is true that 1000 years is as a day to you?"

God to boy: "Yes, my son."

Boy to God: "Then could you loan me \$10 million?"

God to boy: "Give me a day to think about it."

#2543

- 2) God has always seemed slow to humans.
 - a) Even the prophets complained on how long God took.
 - b) Our lives are but a vapor compared to eternity.
 - c) God is not slow, but has his reasons.

- VI. God's purpose in waiting. 3:9
- A. God is patient, not slow.

B. God is loving: doesn't want any to perish, but all to be saved.

1) We prefer to rush to judgment.

Irving Stone's classic history of the American West, "Men to Match My Mountains," contains a passage on early justice. During the Gold Rush, San Francisco had a rash of crime. It got to the point where the police were more corrupt than the criminals.

So in 1851 a group of concerned citizens formed a "Vigilance Committee."

The word "vigilante" is derived from it.

It was not just a lynch mob.

They elected Sam Brannan as president, drew up a constitution and set up parliamentary rules.

Only responsible citizens were allowed to join and they only acted in emergencies when the law was ineffective.

The first official act of the group was to arrest John

Jenkins, who had stolen a safe and dropped it into a boat.

Tried in Brannan's office before a committee jury, Jenkins was declared guilty.

An 1851 law said that grand larceny was punishable by death.

But most of the committee seemed reluctant to hang someone for only stealing a safe.

At this point William Howard threw his cap disgustedly on the table and cried:

"Gentlemen, as I understand it, we came here to hang somebody!"

So that's exactly what they did.

#1539

2) If God acted like this, where would you be right now?

C. We don't get what we deserve, unless we turn down God.

1) God doesn't delight in zapping people.

a) Instead, he wants to save them.

b) Every single one, if possible.

c) He gives you as much time as you need.

2) What we need is to come to repentance.

a) God cannot force us into the Kingdom.

b) He did not force the shepherds or Wise Men to worship Jesus. They had to choose it.

c) We also need to make a choice.

D. Be ready, for the end is coming.

1) A time will come when it is too late.

a) (...parable of virgins with oil lamps) Matt 25:1

2) Be ready now. Today is the day of salvation."

Piper: "And finally Peter responds to the problem of Christ's delay in verse 9 with these words: *'The Lord is not slow about his promise as some count slowness, but is forbearing toward you, not wishing that any should perish but that all should reach repentance.'* The apostle Paul speaks in Romans 11:25 of *'the full number of the Gentiles'* who must come into the Kingdom before the end arrives. Therefore we should count the delay of Christ's coming as an act of mercy and patience until all the sheep are gathered into the fold and not one is lost (John 10:16, 26-30). The tragic irony is that the false teachers take God's patience, which is giving them an opportunity to repent, and turn it against God as an evidence that Christ is not coming. It will be an unanswerable indictment on the judgment day when God asks the false teachers of Peter's day and ours, 'Why did you take my gift of time for repenting and use it as an argument for unbelief?'"

Hoke: "... time, as we know it, is not of first consideration to God. You see, God transcends time. He does not live in time. He lives outside of time. He, as it were, looks down upon time, and sees the beginning and the end together. Providential timing transcends human timetables..."

Next, we need to see that providential timing is based on His redemptive love...

Next, we see that providential timing is certain because it is God's promise."

Wiersbe: "A scoffer is someone who treats lightly that which ought to be taken seriously. The people in Noah's day scoffed at the idea of a judgment, and the citizens of Sodom scoffed at the possibility of fire and brimstone destroying their sinful city. If you have tried at all to witness for Jesus Christ, you have no doubt met people who scoff at the idea of hell or a future day of judgment for this world. Why do these apostates scoff? Because they want to continue living in their sins... If your lifestyle contradicts the Word of God, you must either change your lifestyle or change the Word of God. The apostates choose the latter approach, so they scoff at the doctrines of judgment and the coming of the Lord."

Green: "It is not slackness but longsuffering that delays the consummation of all history, and holds open the door to repentant sinners, even repentant scoffers. Not impotence but mercy is the reason for God's delay... The logical corollary of this verse is that Christians should use the time before the advent for preaching the gospel. The word of evangelism always belongs to the word of the end (Mk. xiii. 10). For the gospel concerns a Person whose first coming ushered in the last days, and whose return will seal them. Its proclamation issues from the command of this Person and is empowered by His Spirit. The preaching of the gospel is eschatological through and through."

Clark: Re vs. 9 -- "If it had been fully realized that Peter was addressing Christians, a great deal of theological confusion would have been avoided. Arminians have used the verse in defense of their theory of universal atonement. They believe that God willed to save every human being without exception and that something beyond his control happened so as to defeat his eternal purpose.

The doctrine of universal redemption is not only refuted by Scripture generally, but the passage in question makes nonsense on such a view.

Since God has made and appointed the wicked for the day of evil, as 2:3, 4 have already said, as 2:9 virtually implies, and as is distinctly stated in Romans 9:17-22, II Thessalonians 2:11-12, or as Prov. 16:4 says, *'The Lord has made everything for its own end, yea even the wicked for the day of evil,'* it follows that God does not will the salvation of every member of the human race. It is not his will that every man without exception should repent. Repentance is a gift of God, and if God willed to, he would give everyone repentance. But obviously he does not. So much for the Scripture in general.

The verse 3:9 would make no sense otherwise. Peter is telling us that Christ's return awaits the repentance of certain people. Now, if Christ's return awaited the repentance of every individual without exception, Christ would never return. Already many have died unrepentant, and their number grows larger every day...

Peter therefore is saying simply that Christ will not return until every one of the elect has come to repentance."

TEXT: 2 Peter 3:10-13

TITLE: *THE BIG BURN THEORY*

BIG IDEA:

GOD'S PROMISES ABOUT END TIMES MOTIVATE US TO PERSEVERE IN HOLINESS

INTRODUCTION:

Everyone has heard of "*The Big Bang Theory*" of how this world came into being. Of course that is completely ludicrous ... but because of the depravity of their hearts, men refuse to believe the simple account of creationism -- the very Word of the God who brought all things into existence. Instead mockers choose to willfully rebel and refuse any accountability to their loving Creator so that they can persist in fulfilling the lusts of corrupted flesh. Here in this passage we have the not as commonly known theory about end times = "*The Big Burn Theory!*" Once again we need to pay careful attention to this word of prophecy which has been verified by the process of divine inspiration through God's holy messengers. It is going to happen ... it could happen very soon ... and it should drastically impact how we live our lives today.

I. (:10, 12B) THIS WORLD IS HEADED FOR DESTRUCTION

A. You Can Count on the Day of the Lord ... But You Can't Predict It

1. You Can Count on it

"But the day of the Lord will come"

Check out OT prophecies for background into this concept of "*the day of the Lord*"

Like a train barreling down the track towards an inevitable wreck;

Like a guillotine that is already falling and will soon reach its final destination.

2. But You Can't Predict It

"like a thief"

B. The Day of the Lord Involves Cataclysmic Total Dissolution

"in which the heavens will pass away with a roar"

"and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat"

"and the earth and its works will be burned up"

"the heavens will be destroyed by burning"

"and the elements will melt with intense heat"

II. (:11-12A) ONLY HOLINESS AND GODLINESS HAVE LASTING VALUE

A. Imminent Destruction Should be a Powerful Motivating Force

"Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way"

What are some of the "all these things" which the world considers so important and wastes so much ambition and energy trying to attain?

B. Holiness and Godliness are All That Count

"what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness"

C. The Godly Long for the Day of the Lord

"looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God"

Piper:"Verse 9 said that God is holding back the final Day that you may repent. It follows that repenting and living a life of holiness helps remove the cause for delay. We don't hasten the Day in an absolute sense because Acts 1:7 teaches that the Father has fixed the times and seasons by his own authority and Jesus said in Mark 13:22 that the Father knows the hour of the Son's return. But from our vantage point we can hasten the Day by fulfilling the pre-conditions of Christ's return, namely the preaching of the gospel to all the nations (Mk. 13:10) and the repentance of the full number of the Gentiles who must come in before the end (Rom. 11:25). Evidently Peter believes that lives of holiness and godliness will indeed fulfill these conditions and hasten the Day of God."

III. (:13) THE NEW WORLD WILL BE CHARACTERIZED BY RIGHTEOUSNESS

A. God's Promises Will Be Fulfilled (despite what the mockers say)

"But according to His promise"

B. God's People Have High Expectations

"we are looking for new heavens and a new earth"

C. God's Program Has Always Been Righteousness

"in which righteousness dwells"

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

1) What are some points in common between how a *thief* operates and how the Lord will come again? Why did Peter use this analogy?

2) Do you think some type of atomic energy is involved in this picture of final dissolution and burning? What did people think before they had any understanding of atomic energy?

3) Do we view ourselves as active partners with God in this kingdom business of spreading the gospel and proclaiming it throughout the world until the entire company of the elect has responded in faith?

4) What will be different about the *new heavens and new earth*?

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Herries: "The Elements - Literally, "the elementum" the "smallest part." In modern terms: the atom! Atomic power is all around us this evening. Even the very breaths we take are filled with highly flammable and explosive gases. The water, which covers 75% of this earth's surface is composed of gases so explosive and volatile that any molecular change would result in the total destruction of the planet.

a. Oxygen - Oxygen is required for all combustion. It is what fire feeds on. Take away the oxygen and the fire dies, turn it on and the fire flares. Yet, with every breath, we pull this highly explosive material into our bodies.

b. Nitrogen - Nitrogen is the component that makes dynamite, TNT and nitroglycerin explosive. Yet, every day we gulp massive quantities of nitrogen in the air we breath. Cannot the same God who made these elements and combined them in such a way that they do not explode, also change the mixture and cause them to explode? Of course He can!

c. Table Salt - It is 1/3 Sodium. Sodium by itself is a gray, putty like substance. It must be kept in kerosene or it will explode. If a drop is placed in water, it will result in a violent fire. Yet, we eat it every day!

d. Water - It is composed of Oxygen and Hydrogen. Both extremely explosive, yet combined in a manner that makes them safe. All God has to do is speak the Word and the chemical arrangement is altered and the world a huge fuel dump. Yet, we drink this life giving substance every day.

e. The Atom - When the atom is split, a change reaction is set in motion that has the power to level cities and vaporize men. Yet, we are all made up of atoms.

f. The Earth - The earth has been compared to a globular egg with a hard crust covering a semi-liquid center. In scale, the earth's crust is the same thickness of an egg's shell when compared to the vast sea of lava under it. There have been times when this lava has burst forth and killed thousands. Yet, we walk on this thin crust every day and trust in the safety of the earth.

(III. V. 7 - "*reserved unto fire*" = "reserved with fire." In the very building blocks of creation God placed the elements essential to bring about a fiery end to this world. Could not the God who made this world also cause it to burn? Certainly!)

(III. The world was created in the beginning and it will be cremated in the end! In that day, all that will matter is your personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ!

Because as bad as the thought that this world will ultimately be destroyed is, the reality of an eternity in Hell is infinitely worse!)"

Piper: "The world you love is going to burn! Don't give yourself over to the pleasures of the world; don't devote yourself to accumulating money; don't spend your life building monuments for the praise of the world. It is all going to burn..."

The implication of verse 11 is this: the only things that are going to survive the fires of judgment on this earth are the expressions of holiness and godliness. I saw that old black plaque with the silver chain and white writing almost every day while I was growing up. It hung in our stairway in Greenville. Now it hangs in our kitchen for our sons to see. It says, 'Only one life, 'twill soon be past. Only what's done for Christ will last.' That's the point of verse 11: everything is going to be burned up but the fruits of holiness. A life lived for the world will go naked into judgment; a life lived for Christ will be laden with eternal riches."

Ritchie: "Peter calls believers to a life of godliness. History as we know it will be swallowed up in judgment. Life as we know it on this earth will be destroyed. The world system and all its values are winding down, passing away. So in light of this truth that we are the people of God, it follows that we should reflect the character of God. And that is possible because we have by faith in Christ become partakers of the divine nature. We are channels of the divine power, having '*escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.*' Thus our ambition should be to please the Lord."

Green: "Christians are expected to look for the coming of the Lord; had not Jesus Himself told them to watch? But this does not mean pious inactivity. It means action. For, wonderful as it may seem, we can actually '*hasten it on*' (NEB) (not *hasting unto* as in AV). In other words the timing of the advent is to some extent dependent upon the state of the Church and of society. What a wonderfully positive conception of the significance of our time on earth. It is no barren waiting for *Finis* to be written. It is intended to be a time of active cooperation with God in the redemption of society. Our era between the advents is the age of grace, the age of the Spirit, the age of evangelism."

De Haan: "Since we know that the earth will be destroyed by fire, how should we be living? In this passage the Apostle suggests four qualities that should mark the Christian who is ready for the last days:

1. An eager expectation.
2. A purposeful service.
3. A peaceful spirit.
4. A moral integrity."

Mounce: "If, as Paul has it, '*what is seen is temporal*' and '*what is unseen is eternal*' (2 Cor. 4:18), where we invest our time and energies is of crucial importance. Frantic attempts to mount the ladder of material success amount to nothing more than scurrying to get the best deck chair on a sinking ship."

Nieboer: "Fire Worse Than Water -- Water on the rampage can be an awful destructive force, as we have noticed in connection with the flood. However, you can touch water without pain, you can swim in it, or build a boat to ride upon it, and many forms of life can live in it, but no life can withstand fire. Noah with his ark full of animals survived the flood. Fish survived, and also all forms of plant life, but when this great fire comes, all will go. No ark will float over this fiery flood..."

Fire does not annihilate; it but changes the form of things. All matter which was in existence when the world began is still with us. The Lord hates sin, and by this fire He will once and forever rid this scene of it. All earthly corruption must go in order that this world may be '*a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness*' (verse 13). Those of us who know Christ will see it and be glad."

TEXT: 2 Peter 3:14-17 (Joe Skoczelak)

TITLE: ON GUARD!

BIG IDEA:

DILIGENT WATCHMEN ALWAYS STAND GUARD

- OVER PERSONAL CHARACTER
- OVER GOD'S TRUTH

INTRODUCTION:

"Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things"

Our Motivation for Standing Guard and Persevering

I. (:14-15) STAND GUARD OVER PERSONAL CHARACTER

A. Cultivate Peace

"be diligent to be found by Him in peace"

not the absence of turmoil -- because Satan is attacking you

Rest in God's Promises; peace in place of anxiety

Requires concentrated effort

Nieboer: "This is the third time in this epistle that Peter urges his readers to diligence. In 1:5 it is to be diligent in developing Christian character; in 1:10, to be diligent in making our calling and election sure. In our verse we are exhorted to be diligent in our preparation in view of future events, that we may be found of Him in peace. Diligence speaks of hard, honest, persevering effort. Certainly if Christ is worth anything, He is worth a life of diligent service on our part. We represent Him in this world; we have a great work to do and little time to do it."

B. Remain Spotless and Blameless

"spotless and blameless"

same words used of the Blood of Christ (1 Pet. 1:18-19)

God's goal is that we escape the corruption that is in the world

Paine: "Peace and holiness are associated in Heb. 12:14."

McNab: "As under the old covenant the offering made to God must be whole and sound, so the consecration of the Christian to God must be free from any taint of self."

C. Persevere In:

1. Waiting for God's Promises

with respect towards His goal of bringing salvation to all of the elect

2. Witnessing While You Still Have Opportunity

this is our role in hastening the day of the Lord

"and regard the patience of our Lord to be salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you"

II. (:16-17) STAND GUARD OVER GOD'S TRUTH

(which is under attack from false teachers)

Preserves you in your own steadfastness

World full of people trying to erode God's Truth:

- Truth can be taken away
- Truth can be eroded over time
- Truth can be diluted with error -- no longer pure or effective

Application: we need to preserve the truth as it has been handed down to us; don't take this responsibility lightly; sometimes you get tired standing for the truth; your words will be distorted; your character will be attacked

cf. Paul -- he had to constantly battle false teachers and unprincipled men all the time; Paul starts a church and then has to revisit it and refute the false teachers who have crept in

Mentality of a Watchman:

moment by moment vigilance; on guard on alert
does not assume that just because things have been peaceful they will continue that way

cf. the alertness and readiness of the Secret Service

A. Difficulty of the Task -- Complexity of the Scriptures

"as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand"

Piper:

- Point 1: Being inspired, the scriptures reveal the mind of God.
- Point 2: The mind of God is vastly greater than our mind and will often be perceived by us as strange and complex, not familiar and simple.
- Point 3: Therefore the scriptures will sometimes be strange and complex and hard to understand.
- Point 4: The continued selection only of what is simple in the Bible would be a sin in the regular preaching of the church, because Hebrews 5:13 says, *'Everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness; for he is a child.'*
- Point 5: Therefore preaching which aims to deliver the whole counsel of God in Scripture (and which does not presume to be wiser than the apostles), will sometimes be complex and will demand from God's people the utmost in humility and mental effort.

B. Danger (to Others) of the Task -- Distortion Leading to Destruction
"which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction."

C. Dedication to the Task -- Stay on Guard
"You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard"

D. Danger (to You) of the Task -- Deceivers who would Lead You Astray
"lest, being carried away by the error of unprincipled men, you fall from your own steadfastness."

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

1) Notice how our role in standing for the truth is supposed to be pursued as much as possible from a personal frame of reference of *"peace"* rather than combativeness. How do believers sometimes make a situation worse by their attitude and approach towards error? How could these warnings of serious danger create anxiety in the heart of believers instead of God's intended gift of peace?

2) If Peter was convinced that his readers truly *"looked for these things"* why did he place such an emphasis on repeating these truths and continuing to remind and warn them?

3) How does this emphasis on the need for skilled teachers (to faithfully explain the complexities of God's Revelation) harmonize with the passage in 1 John that says that since all believers possess the indwelling Holy Spirit, *"you have no need for anyone to teach you"*? (1 John 2:27)

4) What are some of the principles (areas of integrity) that the *unprincipled* false teachers lack as they seek to lead believers astray?

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Ritchie: "We know, for instance, that Paul's doctrine of grace (in Romans 5 through 8), was distorted to say that grace was an excuse for sin; his words on the Christian's freedom in Christ (in Galatians), was said to be a license for sin; his word on the second coming of Christ (in 2 Thessalonians) was twisted to say that Jesus had already come. Some people approach the Scriptures with preconceived ideas of what the Bible says and then look for proof texts to back up what they believe. The way to avoid falling into

this trap is to put yourself under the authority of the word and allow it to judge your prejudices.

G.K. Chesterton wrote in this regard, 'Orthodoxy is like walking along a narrow bridge: one step to either side is a step of disaster. Jesus Christ is God and Man; God is love and holiness; Christianity is grace and morality; the Christian lives in the world and lives in the world of eternity. Overstress either side of these great two-sided truths and at once destructive heresy enters in. One of the most tragic things in life is when a man twists certain Christian truths and holy Scripture into an excuse and even a reason for doing what he wants to do, instead of taking them as guides for doing what God wants him to do.'

McNab: "The apostle argues that the logical outcome of these warnings and promises should be an earnest endeavour after a holy life. The attitude that befits a man who is looking for the coming is one neither of idle anticipation nor of feverish dread, but of confident watchfulness and preparation. He gives diligence that he *may be found of him in peace* (14), not the peace of quietude and stillness but of harmony and absence of discord; i.e. co-operation without friction or hindering disturbance between man's will and God's."

Eerdman: "The purpose of Peter is intensely practical. He has written of the return of Christ not to arouse idle speculation or to occasion bitter disputes but to make better men and women. Two facts he makes perfectly clear: Christ will come, the result will be a reign of righteousness... Thus, as he brings the epistle to a close, Peter gives two parting injunctions: one is to steadfastness, the other to spiritual growth."

Wiersbe: "Most heresies are the perversion of some fundamental doctrine of the Bible. False teachers take verses out of context, twist the Scriptures, and manufacture doctrines that are contrary to the Word of God."

TEXT: 2 Peter 3:18

TITLE: CONCLUSION -- SUMMARY OF THE THESIS STATEMENT

BIG IDEA:
GROW AND GLORIFY

I. SPIRITUAL GROWTH IS THE PERSONAL GOAL

"but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

McNab: "Knowledge of God implies personal experience and continuous fellowship, the secret of Christian steadfastness and progress."

II. THE GLORY OF GOD IS THE COSMIC GOAL

"To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen."

Green: "The false teachers detracted from Christ's glory *now*, by a wicked life, and from His glory *then*, by denying the *parousia*. Peter is determined to reverse both trends."

Ritchie: "What should we be doing now that we know Jesus is coming again? Building bomb shelters? Buying white robes? Stockpiling food? Peter is not interested in our activity, but in our attitude. Here are his wise words to us in our generation. Let us align our thinking with the word of truth about Jesus as we find it in his Scripture. Let us work diligently to be found in peace. Let us be above reproach and blameless in this corrupt society. Let us realize that the Lord's patience with mankind is so that others may enter into a relationship with him. Let us be on guard against false teachers and mockers who distort the truth, to their own destruction. Finally, let us grow in grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ."

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) What steps are you taking to make sure that you are *growing* in your walk with the Lord Jesus? How is knowledge related to growth? How is godliness the natural outcome of a spiritual walk?
- 2) Does the *glory of God* truly overshadow all of your personal motives and agendas?
- 3) What have been the most important lessons for you from this study through 2 Peter?
- 4) How does your outlook of this book change as you view these three chapters as the last words of an apostle about to be martyred for his loyal faith?

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Piper: "The antidote to deception and destruction is growth in the grace and knowledge of Christ. The contrast between verses 17 and 18 is between, on the one hand, a tree which does not grow and so loses its stability in the earth and is blown over by a wind of false teaching and dies, and, on the other hand (v. 18), a tree which keeps its roots planted in God's grace and so grows and stays healthy and stable and does not get blown over by false teaching.

If you can remember 10 weeks ago when we began this series on 2 Peter, I pointed out that the letter begin and ends on the same note of grace and knowledge. I want you to see that again now and how it sums up the main point of the letter. Verse 18 says, *'Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.'* Verse 2 of Chapter One says, *'May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.'* Though the language is somewhat different it seems to me the point is the same. Peter's great desire for these people and for us is that we might experience lots and lots of God's grace; that we might suck it up through our roots and grow by it; that we might soak it in like sunshine through our leaves and grow by it...

The message of 2 Peter is that the joy of hope is the power of godliness. The knowledge of God's promises is the pathway of his power (1:3,4). And the promises, the power, the hope and the godliness are all because of his grace. And so the book ends -- and with these words we take our leave: *'To him be glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.'*

Ritchie: "The second chapter of the Philippian letter lists four areas where believers can *'grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.'*

Christians should grow in the knowledge of
Jesus in his humanity:

' . . . who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself. . . '

Christians should grow in the knowledge of
Jesus as Messiah:

' . . . taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, . . . '

Christians should grow in the knowledge of
Jesus as Savior:

' . . . He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross . . . '

Christians should grow in the knowledge of
Jesus as Lord:

' . . . Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. . . '

Isn't it wonderful to realize that this Lord, this Savior, this Messiah, this Jesus is our personal Lord and Savior!"

Stedman: "Stability is based on knowledge, Peter says -- knowledge of all the unchangeable truth as it is in Jesus Christ. Since we have the facts then, we must not allow ourselves to be carried away, deceived, by those who seek to undermine us. In a time of very real attacks on the truth, now as in Peter's time, we must exercise our freedom in Christ and choose to remain faithful and obedient to him."

Swindoll: "Peter follows his exhortation with two guidelines for growing. First, *grow in grace*; second, *grow in knowledge*. The trick is keeping these two in balance. For example, grace will keep you tolerant and loving, while knowledge will keep you strong. Grace will make you compassionate, while knowledge will make you discerning. Grace will help you smile, knowledge will help you think. Grace will result in vulnerability, knowledge will result in stability."

Green: "Peter's own steadfastness is shown by the fact that he ends his letter as he began it, on the subject of growth (cf. i. 5). The Christian life, it has been said, is like riding a bicycle. Unless you keep moving, you fall off! No true Christian thinks, as the false teachers seem to have done, that he has '*arrived*'. Peter and Paul (Phil. iii. 13 f.) both urge others to press on as they themselves do. The Christian life is a developing life, for it consists in getting to know at ever greater depth an inexhaustible Lord and Saviour."

Jones: "You cannot read these letters of Peter, you cannot read any of the New Testament letters whatsoever, without seeing that Jesus Christ is the centre of all, and He is the constant theme. It is a Book about Him, everything looks to Him -- forward to Him, back to Him; it is all an exposition of Him. We are reminded, then, that the Christian life is essentially a life of relationship to Him. Christianity is Christ. It is not a number of views or a collection of ideas; it is not a number of terms and categories which, if we apply them and use them and meditate upon them, will do certain things to us. It is all about Him, and I say that this letter we have been considering together in these studies makes that quite unmistakable. Peter cannot keep away from it. He has to deal with various problems, but all along he brings them back to Christ. He started by saying he wanted them to grow in the knowledge of Christ; he ends with the same thing. He tells them how he was on the holy mount with Him, how he beheld His glory -- all along it is Christ. Peter was a man whose whole life and outlook were entirely governed and controlled by Jesus Christ. Christ had changed everything for him, and ever since he first met Him, and first understood Him, He was the key to the whole of

existence, to every problem and to every situation. And thus when he ends his letter it is inevitable that he should end with the words we are considering together now. He so loves Christ, and he is so concerned about Christ, that his great ambition in life is that all glory should be given to the Lord Jesus Christ."

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