

1 Peter 4 & 5 2 Peter



The Forum Terrace Church of Christ

Adult Bible Class - Sunday Moring

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Table of Contents

Lesson 1:	The Mind of Christ and the Will of God, 1 Peter 4:1-6	5
	<i>Sunday, April 3, 2022</i>	
Lesson 2:	How to Joyfully Live with Fiery Trials, 1 Peter 4:7-13	9
	<i>Sunday, April 10, 2022</i>	
Lesson 3:	Glorified Suffering, 1 Peter 4:14-19	14
	<i>Sunday, April 17, 2022</i>	
Lesson 4:	Submissive Shepherds & Youth, 1 Peter 5:1-7	18
	<i>Sunday, April 24, 2022</i>	
Lesson 5:	Avoid Sufferings From Satan, 1 Peter 5:8-9	23
	<i>Sunday, May 1, 2022</i>	
Lesson 6:	Peter's Postscript, 1 Peter 5:10-14	26
	<i>Sunday, May 8, 2022</i>	
Lesson 7:	God's Generosity Through Knowledge, 2 Peter 1:1-4	30
	<i>Sunday, May 15, 2022</i>	
Lesson 8:	These Things, 2 Peter 1:7-15	33
	<i>Sunday, May 22, 2022</i>	
Lesson 9:	Knowledge Though the Scriptures, 2 Peter 1:16-22	38
	<i>Sunday, May 29, 2022</i>	
Lesson 10:	False Prophets Will Not Profit - Part 1, 2 Peter 2:1-11	42
	<i>Sunday, June 5, 2022</i>	
Lesson 11:	False Prophets Will Not Profit - Part 2, 2 Peter 2:12-22	48
	<i>Sunday, June 12, 2022</i>	
Lesson 12:	Alert Minds Defending the Second Coming, 2 Peter 3:1-10	54
	<i>Sunday, June 19, 2022</i>	
Lesson 13:	Living in the Present In View of the Future, 2 Peter 3:11-18	60
	<i>Sunday, June 26, 2022</i>	

The Mind of Christ and the Will of God

Arm Yourself With Christ's Attitude

1 Peter 4:1-3: *1. Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, 2. that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. 3. For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles when we walked in licentiousness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries.*

Commonly heard and read in the newspaper and on the evening news are stories about armed jihadist referred often to as "militant fundamentalists" of the Islam religion. Their jihad or "struggle" is involves the use of carnal weapons against the flesh. For the Christian, Jesus, who is the Prince of Peace, desires us to be armed with the same weapons He used in His suffering and struggle to live righteously in a carnal world.

Note, the term "*therefore*" causes the reader to look back at the pervious passages of Christ's victory over His enemies through His sufferings.

Command: Arm Yourself

The word Peter uses for "*arm*" is the Greek word *hoplizo*. This term is only found here in 1 Peter. The command is something Christians must do themselves. Once and for all time they must put on the mind of Christ as if it were armor or a weapon. In the battle against fleshly lusts soldiers of Christ must take up arms for the sake of their soul.

Weapon: Christ's Attitude Toward Suffering

Peter uses a Greek word *ennoia* which is only found one other time in the Bible. In Hebrews 4:12 it is translated "*intents*." Christ's attitude or will or thoughts about suffering must be the same ones the saints arm themselves with in fighting lust.

Christ perfectly has demonstrated the proper mind set the saints must have toward suffering. He had a mind that was willing not suffer (1 Peter 2:21-23). Christ's attitude enabled Him to suffer without retaliating or striking back at His persecutors. His suffering did not cause Him to sin. Mentally He was focused on the end goal of His suffering, so that He could endure to the point of death. His will was total submission to the will of God. This enabled Him to willing take the cup of suffering because it was the Will of the Father. He said "*My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work*" (Jn. 4:34). The mind of Christ toward His suffering allowed Him through death and triumph over death. As Christ's suffering on the cross was the greatest He had to endure for a great victory, so the Christian's suffering, even at its greatest, can bring victory over the lusts of the flesh in the end.

Motives

Knowing how much Christ was willing to come and suffer for us should be a great motivation in our suffering for Him. As a result Christians are to cease from sin. This is not to say that Peter wants Christians to love suffering for the sake of suffering itself, but to hate sin and the fleshly lusts which caused the suffering in the first place. Christ suffered to triumph over sin and death. Saints hate the sin which causes the suffering. Just as a parent hates drunkenness which resulted in the death of a child by a drunk

driver or a parent may grow to hate a dreaded disease that took their young innocent baby.

When does ceasing to live in sin and the flesh occur for the follower of Christ? Perhaps it refers to the moment one is baptized with Christ and has their sins washed away. Paul wrote, "*he who in baptism has shared the sufferings and the death of Christ, is risen to such newness of life with him that sin has no more dominion over him*" (Rom. 6:14). It might imply the results of suffering which moves one to commit to righteousness and turn from sin. When one decides to have Christ's attitude toward suffering, he naturally turns away from sin. Putting on the mind of Christ means first taking off the old outlook which seeks pleasure for the flesh and avoids all suffering. Peter most likely does not refer to the physical death of a Christian which would free him from a world of sin and suffering. After all the break with sin seems to come before persecution and suffering. Guy N. Woods wrote, "one who endures hardship for Christ is not likely to allow sin to have dominance in his or her life. Martyrs, in the hour of persecution and death, do not toy with temptation or surrender to the seductions of the world!" John Owen, a Puritan wrote, "sin in the believer is a burden which afflicts him, rather than a pleasure which delights him."

Christian courted sin, but once He arms himself with the mind of Christ He breaks up with sin. This may be the cause of more suffering not the end of it.

Another reason Christians should arm themselves with Christ's attitude toward suffering and sin is they need to spend the rest of their lives doing the Will of God. In the Garden before His arrest Christ prayed for the removal of the cup of suffering. His attitude was the desire to do the will of God. To follow Christ is to take up one's cross daily while denying self (Luke 9:23).

The final reason to be armed with Christ's mind is that Christians have wasted enough of their lives doing the will of the Gentiles. Life is too short to waste away in pursuit of vain pleasures. Whatever time a man has spent pursuing the lusts of the flesh, it is more than sufficient or more than enough time. Once when I was nineteen I was told that I should not get married, but spend a couple years of my life getting drunk and having fun with women. This makes marriage and a wife appear to be a waste of time. Yet, being a husband or a servant of Christ is far better than being a servant to the desire of the flesh.

What Was the Former Life of Christians?

In this passage Peter contrasts the "*will of the Gentiles*" with the "*will of God*" as totally adverse to each other. It includes such things as:

Licentiousness. This is a term not often used in society today. However, it aptly represents the carnal mind of modern man. The sinner of today lives as if they have a licence to sin or have an inherent entitlement to gratify every desire of the flesh. The Roman historian Tacitus described the first century, "in high society and in the slave community alike we know of prostitution, adultery, homosexuality, child exposure and concern only for bread and circuses."

Lusts. The next term "lust" refers to the strong desires which oft times are natural to all men and women. However, they are the desire of the flesh which are opposed to the mind of Christ and will of God.

Drunkness. The next three sins which the Gentiles walked in are Greek terms related to the consumption of alcohol. These terms descend in strength from extreme drinking to light drinking. The first term is "*oinophlugia*". It is a term which indicates habitual intoxication. Perhaps it comes closest to describing the character and habits of an alcoholic.

Revelries. The Greek term *komos* is translated revelries or carousals. A term often associated with merrymaking and drinking to the point of being a "party animal." "*Wine, woman, and song*" is the modern way of saying *komos*. The term often could be used to describe the Romans feasting in association with the worship of the god of wine, known as Dionysius or Bacchus. "a nocturnal and riotous procession of half-drunken and frolicsome fellows who after supper parade through the streets with torches and music in honor of Bacchus or some other deity, and sing and play before the house of their male and female friends; hence used generally, of feasts and drinking parties that are protracted till late at night and indulge in revelry" (367).

Drinking Parties. The final level is "drinking parties" which is translated from *potos*. Thayer defines the term as "a drinking, carousing" (533). The New English Bible says "*tippling*". That is, drinking continuously in small amounts. Trench in his scholarly work *Synonyms of the New Testament* wrote

concerning *potos*, "not of necessity excessive, but it gives opportunity for excess" (p. 211).

Abominable Idolatries. God has always rejected idols even when man has attempted to worship or honor him through them. Although the Jews were mostly free from this practice which plagued their land after the exile and return, Gentiles were for the most part idol worshipers.

Let God Be The Judge

1 Peter 4:4-6: 4. In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you. 5. They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. 6. For this reason the gospel was preached also to those who are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

Christians Do Not Run with the Wicked

The Greek term for "run" involves the idea of running with a group or band. Before Christ, these sinners used to run in a large group headed from destruction. William Kelley says, "a euphoric stampede of pleasure seekers racing." This is a spiritual race like Spain's running with the bulls or Alaska's running with reindeer. These saints not long participate in the dangerous race of running with and trying to keep up with the wicked.

"Excess" refers to a confluence of waters coming to flow together. Like a raging flash flood the Gentiles ran though this world out of control and out of its banks.

Judgment by the Wicked

Because Christians do not run with the Gentiles in their excessive behavior, they are labeled as strange. The wicked are not just astonished and shocked that former sinners have changed, but they are offended at this. When one becomes a Christian, he is an alien and stranger in the world he once lived. Felix, a Roman critic of the third century wrote of Christians: "you do not go to our shows; you take no part in our processions; you are not present at our public banquets; you shrink in horror from our sacred games" (Octavius 12).

Not only does the Gentile world think ill of former sinners, but they verbally attack the saints speaking evil of them. The term used here is *blasphemeo* which is from which the English term "blaspheme" is derived. This is a vain attempt to attack the righteous life style and beliefs of the Christian. Festus told Paul, "you are out of your mind!" (Acts 26:24). Tacitus described Christians as "the enemy of mankind." Since the early Christians refused to eat meats sacrificed to idols, join trading guilds, go to plays and athletic games and rejected "health care" at a pagan temple, they were falsely maligned as cannibals, incestuous, treasonous, atheists, etc. Today, New Testament Christians have been falsely accused of believing in "water salvation", being homophobic, rejecting the Old Testament, and being a bunch of legalists.

God Is the Judge of All

Those who judge the saints will be judged by God. These same Gentiles "shall give account" meaning a reckoning before God. The term comes from bookkeeping and implies that God will audit their books. They are sure to come up short. This includes not only the living but also those who have already died.

Because God will have all give an accounting of themselves one day, the Gospel has been preached to the dead. Who are meant by the dead? Does Peter refer to those dead spiritually or physically? It could be those dead in their trespasses and sins. However in the previous verse "dead" is use in the literal sense. Deceased Christians have already heard the Gospel preached. These have of course accepted the Gospel. Although the Catholic Church sees purgatory in this passage there in no mention of another chance. These dead have heard the Gospel and have been judged by mere men in the flesh. However, these same dead saints will be judged by God. They are currently alive in the spirit, even if they are physically dead.

All men have a limited time on earth, then they face eternity. In the land of the dying is hope for the land of the living. Whether Jesus comes first, or death comes first, we want to make "the rest of the time" count for eternity. This comes by arming ourselves with the mind of Christ toward suffering.

Questions:

1. With what must Christian arm themselves? Why?
2. What was Christ's attitude towards suffering?
3. When does ceasing to live in sin and the flesh occur for the follower of Christ?
4. Matching the sins or the will of the Gentiles:

___ licentiousness	a.	carnal worship of man made gods
___ lusts	b.	drinking
___ drunkenness	c.	habitually or fully intoxicated
___ revelries	d.	half-drunk "party animal"
___ drinking parties	e.	shameless license to sin
___ abominable idolatries	f.	strong fleshly desires
5. How do the Gentiles run?
6. How do the Gentiles react to the change of behavior in Christians?
7. How are Christians "blasphemed" today?
8. What will God do with these Gentiles who persecute Christians?
9. Who are meant by the "dead" in verse six?
10. What does Catholicism see in verse six? Can this be refuted? If so, how?

How to Joyfully Live With Fiery Trials

The End of All Things Is Near

1 Peter 4:7-11: 7. *But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers.* 8. *And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins."* 9. *Be hospitable to one another without grumbling.* 10. *As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.* 11. *If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

When the preacher is coming to the end of his lesson it affects the behavior the his fellow-worshippers. They begin to wake up, sit up, grab the song book, etc. This is the last age of man, the Christians dispensation. How shall the saints live with suffering in view of the end?

What Is the "End of All Things"?

The phrase "*at hand*" is used throughout the Bible in reference to something and is about to happen (Dt. 32:35b). John the Baptist, Jesus, His disciples all preached that the Kingdom of Heaven was "*at hand*" (Mat. 3:1,2; 4:17; Lk. 10:9). Paul wrote, "*the Lord is at hand*" (Phil. 4:5). James wrote, "*the coming of the Lord is at hand*" (Js. 5:8). "*At hand*" means that something is impending or about to happen or take place.

No one knows how near or far off in the future is the Coming of the Lord. Jesus said, "*but of that day and hour no one knows, no, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only*" (Matt. 24:36). It is true that the Lord coming is imminent, that is, He is of a certainty coming in the future. Yet this is not to be confused with the idea that His coming is immediate, that is, close or nearby. All Christians should live their lives realizing that at any moment in the future Christ could return. This does not necessitate the Bible proclaiming that He will return very soon.

Peter is not referring to the coming of the Lord in judgment upon Jerusalem. Jesus did said there would be signs of this coming event so that the saints would not be caught unaware (Matt. 24:3-34). This would have brought an end to the persecution and suffering caused by the Jews. Yet Peter was writing to a predominately Gentile audience and these saints would not be impacted by the end of the Temple, Levitical priesthood, and priestly sacrifices as would the Hebrew saints (Heb. 10:25).

It is most unlikely that Peter is referring to the day of one's death. The day of death is always possible and near each living being. However, the context speaks of "all things."

A New York Times review began, "some 50 million Americans share a belief that these are the last days." Perhaps, Peter is referring to the "last days." On the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2 the last days were dawning (2:16-21). The "last days" refer to the culmination of the last age of redemption in God's overall plan for man. At the end of the Christian age all things will come to an end. During this final age how should Christians live their lives?

How to Live in These Last Days...

► **Be Serious**

The first thing Christians must do is to be serious or "clear-minded, clear-headed, think straight, and

rationally. This is opposed to living in a panic or illogical manner. Suffering can cause someone to have fuzzy thinking. How one thinks determines how one acts especially during trials.

▶ **Be Watchful in Prayer**

Jesus and the apostles were constantly reminding the disciples to “*watch and pray*” (Mk. 13:33; 14:38; Eph. 6:18; Col. 4:2; Matt. 25:13). Had Peter watched and prayed instead of sleeping in the Garden, he would have been a greater help to Jesus and able to handle the temptation to deny Christ. Later in the midst of suffering persecution for preaching Christ’s crucifixion and resurrection Peter and John told the disciples not to panic but pray (Ac. 4:23,24). As the end of all things approaches, effective prayer becomes even more important. The term “watch” entails the idea of alertness and self-control not drunk or asleep. “*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God*” (Phil. 4:6).

▶ **Be Fervent in Love**

Love is the desire to do what is best for the other person regardless of their attitude or yours. Peter demands that our love is “*fervent*” in its intensity. The Greek term used here *ektenes* is used to describe an athlete who strains every muscle sprinting toward the finish line or as a horse at full gallop.

The extent of our love for one another is to cover many sins, literally a “plethora” of sins. Peter quoted from Proverbs 10:12 which says, “*Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all transgressions.*” Love is like a big bottle of “White Out” which a typist used to cover up their typos. Just as the God’s love for us motivated Him to cover our sins with the blood of His Son, so the saints must be willing to forgive one another. This is not a condoning of sin or ignoring or a tolerance for the sins of others. It does involve bearing with their tactlessness and enduring their momentary meanness. Perhaps Peter was remembering the time he was told to forgive another up to 490 times in a day for someone’s trespasses against him.

▶ **Be Hospitable**

What better way is there to show love than to demonstrate it through hospitality. The Greek word *philozenos* literally means to love a stranger. God’s people have always been commanded to show hospitality. Elders and deacons and widows indeed should be “*given to hospitality*” (1 Tim. 3:2; 5:10). It was part of the Law of Moses (Ex. 22:21; Dt. 4:28,29). Abraham and Lot were known to have shown hospitality to angels while not knowing at first who they were (Gen. 18:1f; 19:1f). In a time of persecution for Christians and a time when hotels were not readily available, it was good for homes to be opened freely to other suffering saints. Hospitality was a great assistance to the spreading of the Gospel, for example, Simon a tanner for Peter (Ac. 20:6); Lydia for Paul (Acts 16:15f); Mnason of Cyprus (Ac. 21:16); Pricilla and Aquila (Rom. 16:4,5); etc.

Peter adds an important qualification: hospitality to fellow-saints was to be done without complaining. It must be from a willingly heart. Robinson defines “grumbling” as a “whispering, low suppressed discourse.” Hospitality should not be shown hypocritically by serving with a smile while grumbling to oneself on the inside. True, hospitality is often shown to others at inconvenient times; interrupting family plans and schedules, and at an extra cost of funds needed for other things. Yet, God loves a cheerful giver (2 Cor. 9:7).

▶ **Be Good Stewards of God Given Gifts**

In the ancient world a steward of the house had responsibility and control over what belonged to his master. He had to take proper care of these things because he would have to give an account for them to the master at any moment. God has given us, His stewards, many gifts for which we must properly care. This is due to the fact that at any moment the end will come and we must give an account to the Master.

The particular gift in mind here is the grace of God. It is the unmerited favor one has received without earning it from God. “The grace of God, that manifests itself in various ways” (A & G 690). This gift is “manifold” that is, many-sided or multi-colored. God’s gifts of grace come in all shapes, sizes, and colors. Perhaps they are endowments of miraculous gifts through the laying on of an apostles’ hands. It could be natural abilities one has been blessed with. These gifts are to be used to serve others. They must be cultivated by the individual for the purpose of serving or ministering, teaching, exhorting, giving, ruling, and showing mercy. Unopened and unused gifts are a waste. Every saint has at least the great

gift of salvation given by God through grace. Therefore, every saint can at the very least share that with others.

▶ **Be Speaking God's Word**

The word "*oracles*" from the Greek term *logion* refers to divine utterances or revelations. Christians are to communicate what God has revealed in His Word. When sharing the Gospel with others, a saint must keep in mind that he is speaking the words coming from God not himself or a mere man. Peter would later write, "*knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit*" (2 Pet. 1:20,21). Before speaking to others, one must first listen to God. This is a clear call for all Christians to speaking only what God has revealed and where God has not spoken, the saint must be silent where God has not spoken. He must have "book, chapter and verse" for every word he teaches.

▶ **Be Ministering to Others**

Not only should Christians share the revealed Word of God with others, they must serve one another. How? As a song sung in worship indicates: "There is much to do there's work on every hand." There are poor to need assistance, the sick who need a visit, the weak and discouraged who need to be uplifted, etc. Wherever there is a need there is an opportunity to serve. Too many of saints are much too cozy sitting around being served by others. Service to others often involves sacrifice. It is not like Bob Roe who has said, "Lord, I'll serve you anywhere, but may I suggest Maui?"

Serving others is to be done with the abilities God has supplied us. The term for "*supplied*" in classical Greek refers to the local philanthropist who supplied the chorus with everything they needed for their public performances.

▶ **Be Glorifying God**

What is the ultimate motive for all that a Christian does? It is to give God the glory. God gives His children the gifts, the abilities, and the opportunities to use the gifts, and He alone must get the glory. The greatest gift to all men is His Son, Jesus Christ. It is through Him God received the greatest glory. Peter ends with doxology with a well placed "*amen*" for a mighty confirmation that God gets the glory for all we do.

Strange Rejoicing

I Peter 4:12,13: 12. *Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you;* 13. *but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.*

The world has a very different view of suffering than what Peter is presenting in this epistle. The carnal mind sees suffering as something that should be avoided whenever possible. Suffering is not random and without purpose.

The Christian is taught to view suffering as a positive means to serve God and others in this world. Whenever they are faced with financial shortages, verbal abuse for their convictions, tearing up their knee by slipping in the tub, being rear-ended by a reckless driver who has not insurance, they see it as a valuable opportunity to rejoicing in the Lord and see His loving providential hand in their lives.

Do Not Think Suffering is Strange

Peter begins this paragraph calling his fellow-Christians "*beloved.*" In the Greek the term is *agapetos* which is from *agape* meaning "love". "*Beloved*" could also be translated "favorites" or "dear friends."

Suffering should never be viewed as a strange or surprising or astonishing novel event in the life of a saint. Do not be surprised by suffering. It is a normal part of Christian's life. Suffering is normal. Christ warned the disciples it would come (Jn 15:18-21). He never promised any follower, "Come follow me and you will never suffering again." It is even part of God's plan that the righteous suffer as His Son was

called to suffer for all men. These persecutions which are about to happen to them are not accidents, but divinely permitted incidents.

The intensity of these trials are "fiery." Remember when Daniel's three friends were thrown into the "burning fiery furnace." It was HOT! Putting someone or something through the fire is to test them to the very limits.

These fiery trials are not groundless but serve a noble purpose in the lives of Christians. Like real fire they have a purifying effect upon the souls of the saints (1 Pet. 1:6-7). The problems these fiery trials present often help give one direction. Pain has a way of changing one's behavior. Problems of life test what we are made of. Someone has said, "People are a lot like tea bags, you don't know what's in them until you drop them in hot water." Problems of life can even protect us. As Joseph who had been sold into slavery by his brothers, told them "but as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive" (Genesis 50:20). These fiery trials can even discipline us. The psalmist wrote, "it is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I may learn Your statutes" (Psalm 119:71). As other whit has quipped, "If we don't change when we see the light, we change when we feel the heat." Pain can be a important part of the maturation process. Have you ever hear of growing pains?

Rejoice in Suffering

Jesus gave two good reasons why His disciples should rejoice in suffering persecution: "for great is your reward in heaven" and "for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you" (Matt. 5:10-12). Paul, when suffering with his thorn in the flesh, glorified God in it because when he was weak and became strong (2 Cor. 12:7-10). James wrote that Christians should rejoice because "the testing of your faith produces patience" (1:2-4).

The main reason Peter gives for rejoicing in our sufferings is that the saints are fellowshipping in Christ's suffering. When Daniel's three friends were cast into the burning fiery furnace, they discovered they were not alone (Dan. 3:23-25). When Paul face Caesar in trial the Lord was with him (2 Tim. 4:9-18). The apostles were imprisoned, beaten, and commanded by the Sanheidrin not to preach Jesus any more. They rejoicing being considered worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ (Acts 5:40-42).

The second reason Peter gives for rejoicing in fiery trials is the expectation of future glory. When all of God's suffering saints get home to heaven they will be glorified before God and all creation. The very thought of this should make every Christian "glad" with "exceeding joy." Lenski says this means "rejoicing with finality, with utter completeness" (204). If we suffer with Christ, we shall reign with him (2 Tim. 2:12). First comes a cross and only then comes the glory of a crown.

Why does God allow Christians to suffer? So that His Children will be able to rejoice and be glad and exceeding joy. "Suffering is the storm cloud that provides the canvas on which God paints the rainbow" (Phillips 204).

How does a Christian face suffering in these last days? By being sober, being watchful in prayer, have fervent love, showing hospitality, being good stewards of spiritual gifts, speaking God's Word, ministering to others, and glorifying God

Questions:

1. What does "at hand" mean?
2. T F Peter is saying that the coming of the Lord is to be immediate or close to happening.
3. Why is this passage not referring to the coming of the Lord in Judgment upon Jerusalem?

4. Why are the commands "watch" and "pray" coupled together so often in the Bible?
5. How are the saints to love? What does this mean?
6. Show from Bible examples how being hospitable help the giver and the reciever.
7. List various gifts from God over which a Christian must practice good stewardship.
8. Why must a Christian have "book, chapter and verse" for all that he speaks?
9. What is the ultimate motive for all that a Christian does?
10. Why should Christians thing that suffering with fiery trials is not strange?
11. What are the two reasons Jesus gave in Matthew 5:10-12 for HIs disciples rejoicing in suffering?
12. What are the two reasons Peter gives in this text for the saints to rejoice in suffering?

Glorified Suffering

Suffering for the Name of Christ

1 Peter 4:14-16: 14. If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified. 15.

But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters. 16. Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.

When a Christian Suffers for Wearing Christ's Name He Should....

◆ Consider Himself Blessed

Could you imagine telling someone that a drunk hit your car and destroyed it while also breaking you leg and nose and they say "congratulations!?" Well in this passage the word "blessed" means "congratulations." Peter tells those who are being insulted by others for being a Christian: "congratulations!" Why? They have been recognized for being a Christian.

◆ Know That God's Glory Rests Upon You

The "Spirit of glory" and the "spirit of God" are the same as they refer to the Holy Spirit - the third person in the godhead. The Christian is therefore not alone in his suffering for the Holy Spirit is with him.

Just as the shekinah or glory of God rested over the tabernacle so the Cloud of glory as a symbol of God's presence, the Spirit now rest over those who are suffering persecution as Christians (Ex. 24:16: 40:34). As Stephen lay dying being stoned to death, He looked up and saw the glory of God with Christ glorifying his martyrdom by standing next to God's throne (Ac. 6:15; 7:54-60). Surely, when suffering the no saint is alone the godhead is with him.

◆ Remember He is Glorifying God Through Suffering

Our suffering enables us to glorify God's name. God's children wear the name of Christ. When suffering for His name's sake it will reflect back on God's Son in a positive way. Jesus Christ is worth suffering for and enduring persecution.

◆ Be Proud They are Suffering as a Christian

The name "*Christian*" is only found three times in the entire Bible (Acts 11: 26 ; Acts 26:28 ; I Peter 4:16). It was given, by divine origin, for the first time to the disciples in Antioch (Ac. 11:26), being the "*new name*" which the "*mouth of the Lord would name*" (Is. 62:2). It is a glorious name to wear and be associated with. Some say it means "little Christs." We are the few, the proud, the Christians. If someone should mock a saint by saying, "Ha, ha you're a Christian" the saint should say, "yes I am and thank you for noticing!"

How to Suffer in the Name of Christ?

• Not as a Guilty Man

When a Christian does suffer, he should make sure it was not brought upon himself by his own sinful life. Peter is not saying that just any time and any reason a Christian suffers it is glorious and a blessing. No one, not even a Christian, should ever rejoice when they suffer for being evil. Suffering brought upon a saint for his own sinfulness does not glorify Christ but brings shame upon all.

If a Christians becomes a murderer he deserves to suffer for his sin. Every saints who steals should suffer as a thief. An evildoer is anyone who practices evil. Evil is not good and those who do it will experience the wrath of God and perhaps punishment by the government (Rom 13:1f). A busybody is someone who is attempting to exercise oversight in the affairs of another outside their realm of responsibility. "He who passes by and meddles in a quarrel not his own is like one who takes a dog by the ears" (Prov. 26:17). Many busybodies employ gossip while meddling. "Gossip is worse than the assassins bullet, it murders the character of many good people." To be guilty of these and suffer is not a source of pride for any person, especially a child of God.

- **Do Not Be Ashamed**

When Peter denied the Lord the third time, the cock crowed as Christ had forewarned. Peter was ashamed of himself and went out and wept bitterly. First, he was ashamed to confess he was a disciple of Christ and then was ashamed of himself for not being willing to suffer as a disciple of Christ (Lk. 22:54-62). When Polycarp was about to be burned to death as a Christian he was afford one last chance to recant his faith. Polycarp said: "Eighty-six years I have served him, and he never did me any wrong. How can I blaspheme my King who saved me?" What a contrast with the Christian of today who is ashamed to speak up about his faith in Christ or his belief that homosexuality is a sin. How often do saints remain silent when wickedness is going on right in front of them? How often do students who are Christians remain silent when the atheistic professor asks, "no one in this class still believes in the myth of creation in Genesis, do they?" Jesus Christ was never too ashamed of lost sinners to speak up and die for them (Heb. 2:11). Why is it that the saved are ashamed of Him?

- **Glorify God's Name**

In the name Israel, God's name is sanctified - Isra-El. In the name of Christian Christ's name is glorified - Christ-ian. In suffering for being a Christian both God, His Son, and eventually the saint will be glorified.

Suffering & Future Salvation

1 Peter 4:17-19: 17. For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? 18. Now "If the righteous one is scarcely saved, where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?" 19. Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.

How do the present sufferings of Christians relate to their future? How does the future relate to the disobedient?

Judgment is Coming

- **Judgment Will Begin With/From God's House**

The judgment referred to here is the verdict not the act of judging. God has judged many sinful men and women and passed a sentence or verdict against them. David, a man after God's own heart, committed adultery and murder. The verdict from God was that the sword would never leave his house. Ananias and Sapphira both lied to God before the church and died for the lie (Acts 5:1-11). Herod Agrippa who beheaded James the brother of John was eaten of worms and died. Paul struck Elymas the sorcerer with blindness for his attacks against the Gospel.

The term for "judgment" in the Greek is *krima*. It could be a verdict of condemnation or of approval. When a Christian is tested by fiery trials the judgment could be one of condemnation if they fail the test or of glory if the saint remains faithful.

The "house of God" is where the judgment is to begin. This is not in reference to the temple of the Jewish nation. In this case it refers to those children of God who make up the church (1 Pet. 2:5; 1 Tim. 3:15; Eph. 2:19-22; 1 Cor. 3:16,17). Perhaps Peter is drawing this idea from Ezekiel 9:1-8.

The time of this judgment is present tense. The judgment is not the Judgment Day but the current persecution and suffering which is occurring or about to come. Perhaps the persecution begun by Nero in Rome is the reference point for the beginning of this judgment. Will the saints be faithful or will their fail to remain faithful?

■ **Christians Will Be Saved With Difficulty**

Peter quotes Proverbs 11:31: *“if the righteous will be recompensed on the earth, how much more the wicked and the sinner.”* Salvation will come to Christians in God’s house with difficult experiences as they share in the sufferings of Christ. It does not mean that very few Christians will be saved. It does not mean to say that they will be saved “by the skin of their teeth.” Paul taught the early disciples that *“we must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God”* (Acts 14:22b). No one can be saved without effort, and in fact the righteous are saved only by constant and strenuous effort on their part.

■ **The Ungodly Will Not Be Saved**

This passage speaks of two kinds of People: the righteous and the ungodly. Consequently there will be two verdicts or judgments: reward for those who will not appear before God with His approval and punishment for those the ungodly. Naturally, two different outcomes based upon God’s judgments. The righteous will receive eternal life. The term for “end” is *telos* in the Greek. It is “the final goal toward which men and things are striving, of the outcome or destiny which awaits them in accordance w. their nature” (BAG 819). Concerning the wicked’s end Paul wrote, *“these shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power”* (2 Th. 1:9).

■ **Commit Souls to God**

The righteous are those who will respond in light of the suffering they are about to face by deciding to commit themselves to God. This commitment must be according to God’s Will. This involves doing good regardless of the suffering. This shows that committing one soul is through constant steadfast obedience to the will of God. The term commit is the financial idea of depositing one’s soul with God for safe keeping. This is the like a man entrusting a faithful friend with his most valuable possessions. As Jesus cried out upon the cross to the Father: *“into thy hands I commit my spirit.”*

Peter gives two reasons why a Christian should entrust their souls to God during this time of fiery trials and suffering. First, because God is faithful. Thayer defines the term here to mean a “person who show themselves faithful in the transaction of business...” (514). A child of God can trust the Father’s character as He is always faithful to keep His word. God will keep whatever is committed to Him (2 Tim.1:12). The second reason for committing one’s soul to God is because He is the Creator.

The people of this world govern their present lives based upon their past. The children of God look to the future to determine how they will conduct themselves in this present life. In the end one will be like the rich man concerned for relief from suffering for the present moment in a place of torment. In contrast other will be like Lazarus who had no concern about his future nor regrets concerning his past.

Questions:

1. Why did Peter bless those saints who were suffering?
2. Who all is with the suffering saint?
3. Are there times when Christians should not be proud of suffering? Give examples.

4. Who is a "*busybody*"?
5. How to suffering saints act ashamed for being a Christian today?
6. What and when is the judgment that is to begin with the House of God?
7. What does it mean that the suffering saints will only be saved with difficulty?
8. Where is the ungodly appear? What will happen to them?
9. In what manner are the saints to commit their souls to God?
10. What two reasons did Peter give to motivate the children of God to make such a commitment?.

11.

Submissive Shepherds and Youth

Relationship of Elders to the Flock

1 Peter 5:1-4: 1. The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: 2. Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by constraint but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; 3. nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; 4. and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.

Peter has previously discussed submissive citizens, slaves, the Savior, wives, husbands, and Christians in general. Now he returns to speak about two more groups: elders and the youth. Times of persecution demand that God's people have adequate spiritual leadership. Their example and oversight is crucial to the survival of the flock when wolves attack. Some leaders will take off and run away as soon as times become difficult. These prove to be mere hirelings instead of true shepherds who are willing lay down their lives for the sheep. Furthermore, shepherds of God's flock are more effective if the little lambs are in submission to them.

Peter's Credentials for Exhorting Elders

As Peter changes his focus to two specific groups. He gives his credentials for speaking on this matter. First, he was a fellow elder. This does not mean he was merely and old saint. Although the word here is used for an elderly man in other places. The context clearly points to shepherds who have been entrusted with oversight of God's local flock. This passage is parallel to Paul's discussion with the elders of Ephesus in Acts 20:17ff. Second, Peter was an eyewitness to the sufferings of Christ. The term "witness" come from the same Greek word from which the English term "martyr" is derived. Peter could speak about the Savior's suffering from his personal observations. Finally, he is a partaker of the coming glory to be revealed at the end of time. Notice with what great confidence Peter assures his readers of this glory.

Exhortation to...

◆ **Elders**

Note here where Peter speaks of a plurality of men serving in these congregations as elders. Never is there just one man appointed to this position in the New Testament churches (Ac 21:17-18; Acts 14:23; Phil. 1:1; Acts 20:17). Obviously, older men are to be selected for leadership. This was the pattern in the villages and cities of the Jews from ancient times. The Greeks appoint men forty and over in their city councils who were also called "elders." In Asia Minor, also, the members of councils were called "elders." Peter is not just referring to older men in the congregation. After all, they must have very specific qualifications (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Tit. 1:5-9). Furthermore, used as synonymous terms in the New Testament are elders, presbyters, bishops, overseers, pastors and shepherds (Ac 20:17,28; Tit. 1:5-7; 1 Pet. 5:1-2)

◆ **Shepherds Feeding God's Flock**

The verb form for to shepherd or tend the flock is used here describing the work which elders are to do among them saints. The verb involves more than just feeding the sheep but tending to their various needs. A shepherd will guard the sheep from snakes, pits, poisonous plants, and dangerous animals.

Being a shepherd in relation to the flock is a far cry from the organizational management structure of modern corporations. When trouble comes good shepherds will keep the flock from scattering.

◆ **Overseers - Serving**

The verb overseeing is a term borrowed from Greek government and institutions. An overseer was a governor or superintendent. The office is a duty rather than an honorary title. This suggests the various administrative responsibilities of an elder as he serves the needs of the flock.

Extent of Oversight: "Among You"

The elders have the oversight only of the flock which is among them. However, in truth it is God's flock purchased by the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28). The flock does not represent a building, but the congregation of sheep who gather at a specific location. As Paul told the elders of the flock at Ephesus: *"the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers"* (Acts 20:28). Paul appointed elders for each congregation in Acts 14:23.

Therefore, the oversight of an eldership must be limited to the local congregation which is among them and to which they were appointed to serve. They have authority concerning one flock and never a plurality of flocks.

Manner of Serving

First, elders are not to serve the flock because they have been constrained or forced to do so. God has always desired a spirit of volunteering in the church. Men who have to be coerced to lead will not likely make good leaders. Instead, they must serve the congregation willingly. Vincent says this means with a ready mind or as Paul put it *"desiring the position"* (1 Tim. 3:1). An elder is a volunteer, not a draftee. The more reluctance a man has in being a shepherd the more reluctantly he will serve. A man who is constrained to do a job will likely do it grudgingly whereas a man who takes on a position willingly will most likely fulfill it wholeheartedly.

The next set of negative/positive commands related to the manner of an elder's serving is: not for dishonest gain but eagerly. It is true that an elder is allowed to receive financial support for his work (1 Tim. 5:17,18). Part of the negative qualifications Paul listed for Timothy and Titus for an elder is: *"not greedy of filthy lucre"* (1 Tim. 3:3) and *"not given to filthy lucre"* (Tit. 1:7). Shepherds are not to fleece the flock. Instead they are motivated to serve the sheep eagerly. They would be motivated by love for souls, not love of money.

The final manner of serving the flock involved their leadership style. They are not to lord it over the flock. Sheep do not respond as well to tyrants. There is a contrast between dictatorship and leadership. The bossy, autocrat may get more done, but not as an overseer but as an overlord. The elder must always remember that these sheep are not his but have been entrusted to him. He, therefore, cannot treat them any way he desires. His leadership style must be one where he leads by example not intimidation. The term for *"example"* is the same word in the Greek used to represent an architect's plan or a sculptor's or painter's model. People are willing to follow a leader who practices what he preaches and gives them a good example to imitate. Good leaders practice show and tell.

Reward

Good shepherds of God's flock will be rewarded by the Good Shepherd: Jesus Christ (John 10:11). Not only is He a shepherd but he is the Overseer as well (1 Pet. 2:25). Christ will one day reward these faithful shepherds with a never-fading crown of glory. This is the *stephanos* of a victor not the *diadema* of royalty.

This requires a shepherd to give an account of the souls which had been entrusted to him. *"Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you"* (Heb. 13:17).

Submissive Youth

1 Peter 5:5-7: 5. Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be

submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble." 6. Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, 7. casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

In times of fiery trials and suffering how should the young Christians secure their hearts?

Two Commands

▶ **Submit**

Again the term "submit" is a military term which speaks of troops which fall in rank under their officer. They do so with an attitude of responsibility and willing cooperation.

This time it is the younger Christians who are called upon to submit. They are to submit to elders who are watching out for their souls by shepherding and overseeing their needs (Heb. 13:7,17). This willing cooperation is mutually beneficial for everyone in the flock. Notice Peter wants all of them to be submissive. Everyone from the youth to the elders of a congregation must submit to each other. Other passages in the New Testament teach mutual submission to one another (Eph. 5:21). Effective congregations are like winning ball teams. Every member of the team or congregation must learn to work effectively together. Everyone doing their part for the benefit of the whole.

▶ **Be Clothed With Humility**

The Greek term for "*clothed*" means "to fasten or gird on one's self; the *egkomboma* was the white scarf or apron of slaves, which was fastened to the girdle of the vest and distinguished slaves from the freemen; hence I Peter 5:5,...gird yourselves with humility as your servile garb i.e., by putting on humility show your subjection to one another" (Thayer 166). As a slave puts on an apron in order to submissively serve his master. As Jesus girded Himself with a towel and washed the feet of his disciples (Jn. 13). This is the apron or girdle of humility. An attitude which says, "I am not too proud to serve others." True humility is not self-deprecating but an exaltation of others.

Three Reasons

• **They are Under God's Mighty Hand**

The command is to "*humble yourself*" literally is to "make yourself low, or bring down one's stature or status." As God was able to bring the Israelite slaves deliverance from Egyptian bondage "*with a strong hand*" (Ex. 13:9). Humility is required because it is God who brings deliverance not ourselves.

• **God Resists the Proud**

The verb "*resist*" is a military term, as of any army marshaled for battle. Why God resist the proud? Because He hate pride (Prov. 6:16). It is the pride of life which stirred Eve to take the forbidden fruit. It is the proud, self-willed heart which determines to defy God.

• **God Gives Grace to the Humble**

The final reason for their submission and humility is because God will give grace only to the humble. The only antidote to pride is the grace of God. Just as you cannot fill a cup which is already filled, God cannot fill a man's heart which is already full of himself.

Two Rewards

◆ **God Will Exalt Us in Due Time**

Pride is self-exultation. For those who submit and are humble God will glorify. Christ stated that if one humbles himself, he shall be exalted (Matt. 23:12; Luke 14:11; 18:14). When God deems the time to be right every submissive, humble heart will be generously rewarded.

◆ **God's Care for Us**

God wants all the saints' cares to be cast upon Him. He can handle anything we throw at Him. Cast the material cares; cares about relationships, physical distress, burdens about the future; spiritual trouble, etc. These are not the worries or a Christian filled with anxiety, but the day by day struggles all saints must endure with God's help.

The casting of cares involves the act of surrendering as when one gets rid of something by throwing

it out. Give God all your troubles. It is also an act of humility. By casting all our cares upon God a Christians is saying in effect, "I cannot handle anything on my own. I need Your help every day and in every way." It also involves the act of trusting in God to take care of you. A trusting child of God knows that nothing is beyond their Father's concern or ability. Finally, casting one's cares upon God encompasses an act of maturity. It is not an effort to pass everything off on God and failing to do one's part. As Cromwell advised his soldiers: "Trust in God, and keep your powder dry." A mature understanding of our ourselves and of our God involves casting every care on Him while still doing everything required of us.

God does care for all His children as a mother gives comfort (Is. 66:13). God cares as a father who pities His children (Ps. 103:13). He cares like a shepherd seeking a lost sheep (Ezek. 34:12; Matt. 18:1-14; Ps. 23:1). He even cares for you as a hen gathers her chicks (Matthew 23:37).

God cares enough about His children to count the steps of their feet (Job 14:16); to bottle the tears from their eyes (Ps. 56:8), to write down the thoughts of their hearts (Mal. 3:16), and to number the hairs upon their heads (Mt. 10:30).

A political activist was cast into prison. Feeling forgotten and forsaken by family and friends he took a stone and scratched upon his cell wall: "Nobody Cares". One day he noticed a green shoot appear through the crack in the stone floor. Each day he would share part of his water rations with the green blade. Suddenly, one sunny day he noticed it had blossomed into a beautiful blue flower. Scratching out his previous message of gloom he wrote in hope: "God Cares."

The gods of the ancient Egyptians, Greeks and Romans were aloof and uncaring. The true God of Heaven demonstrates the depth of His care with an ultimate act of love. He cared enough to send the very best, His only Son to die for our sins.

Questions:

1. What are Peter's "credentials" for speaking on this matter?
2. What other terms are used for "elders" in the New Testament?
3. What does a good shepherd do for the flock? How does this translate to the work of an elder?
4. What is involved in overseeing the local congregation?
5. What is the extent of the elders' oversight?
6. What is the manner in which shepherds are to oversee the flock?

7. What will be the reward for good shepherds over God's local flocks? Who will reward them?
8. What two commands does Peter give the youth?
9. The three reasons or motives do they have for obeying these commands?
10. What are the two rewards promised to the faithful youth?
11. What does casting our cares upon the Father involve?
12. What metaphors are used in the Bible to demonstrate the care God has for us?

Avoiding Sufferings From Satan

How to Avoid Becoming a Lion's Lunch

1 Peter 5:8,9: 8. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. 9. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.

Although God cares for His children (5:7) there is an adversary who does not care about the well-being of our souls. Therefore, Christians are to be extra cautious and watchful.

Peter knew all too well the power of the adversary. On the night before for Christ crucifixion Peter was told that he would deny the Lord that very night three times before the cock crowed. Jesus warned Peter that Satan was going to "sift" him and the other apostles (Lk. 22:31). Jesus said to Peter, "he is seeking to sift you," that is, to put you through the sieve. Later, in the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus warned Peter to watch and pray that he enter not into temptation. Yet Peter did not heed that warning, and he ended up denying his Lord three times.

Peter now warns the saints of some things they can do to keep from becoming lunch for a lion.

Recognize the Danger

The devil is real. He is not some mythical being. He is not a metaphor for evil. He possesses a real danger to all men and women. The terms used to describe him demonstrate that he is an obvious enemy to be avoided. Matthew calls him "*the tempter*" in Matthew 4:3. In Matthew 12:24 he's called "*Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons.*" Jesus calls him "*the evil one*" in Matthew 13:19. Matthew 13:39 calls him "*the enemy.*" In John 8:44 Satan is called "*a liar*" and "*the father of lies*" who was "*a murderer from the beginning.*" He is a "*serpent*" because of his subtlety (2 Cor. 11:1-4). He is "*the prince of the power of the air*" (Eph. 2:2). He is called "*the angel of the abyss,*" "*Abaddon*" and "*Apollyon*" in Revelation 9:11. The later two words mean "destroyer." He is called "*the accuser of our brethren*" in Revelation 12:10. He is called "*the serpent*" in Genesis 2 and "*the great dragon,*" and "*the serpent of old*" in Revelation 12 and Revelation 20. He is the adversary of God and all those who are friends of God. He is called the "*devil*" because he slanders the saints and falsely accuses the faithful.

In this text Peter refers to this old serpent and dragon as a hungry lion. This lion is very experienced. He has been stocking and catching his prey for thousands of years with great success. He devours them, that is, he swallows them down. He is hungry with an appetite that is never satisfied for the souls of men. He is fierce, viciously attacking his prey without mercy. As an insatiable lion Satan is always on the prowl for new victims. He is wandering through the earth looking for the who are not alert. He will attack everyone at anytime but like real lions likes to prey upon the weak and vulnerable.

Be Sober

To be sober is to gird up the mind with its thoughts so as to be ready for action. Whereas this word could be used in reference to being free from the influence of intoxicants, it is most likely used in a more general sense here to indicate a discipline of mind and body. To have one's mind under control and then one's body so as not to be vulnerable to Satan's attacks. So one would gird or tie up any loose ends of their mind and have their thoughts collected at all times to deal with a sudden attack. All the days one spends on earth he will live in the Devil's territory. The world is not a Christian's play ground but the Lion's hunting

ground, therefore be seriously minded at all times concerning temptation. If one was walking through the savanna in Africa where lions were known to roam, he would walk quickly and safely with a watchful eye paying close attention at all times.

Be Watchful

To be watchful means a Christians must be vigilant or in a literal sense “be or keep awake.” Any one caught sleeping on the savanna without someone keeping watch is easy lion lunch. Consider the animal shows on television where a herd of wildebeests will have eyes always watching out for a pride of lions on the prowl.

In many passages watchfulness is often associated with prayer. Jesus told Peter, James, and John in the Garden. *“Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak”* (Matt. 26:41). What good is it to watch out for Satan if one is not going to call for the Shepherd of his soul to help when attacked.

Resist

This is the same word used in James 4:7: *“therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”* This means to stand one’s ground unwaveringly during attack so as not to give ground but constantly give resistance. When faced with a possible lion attack do not play dead. That might work with a grizzly bear but not a lion. Do not run away this will incite the lion to give chase. James says if you resist he will flee. Most information about dealing with a lion attack encourages the would be victim to hold their ground and fight back wit whatever is at hand. The devil is like any bully and retreats when he is bravely resisted. Do not give him an opportunity to attack. Lion’s will go for the throat or the back of the neck. So do not run or fall down but stand and fight. Paul said, *“do not give the devil an opportunity”* (Ephesians 4:27). Of course with the Devil there are no physical tools or weapons to fight him regardless what is shown in Hollywood movies: crosses and holy water. Satan is a spiritual foe and therefore it will take spiritual weapons to defeat him. *“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh”* (2 Cor. 10:3). Jesus resisted him with the Word of God (Matt. 4:1-11).

Be Steadfast in Faith

When resisting a lion one must stand their ground and fight back. The ground we are to stand fast upon is our faith, not the “holy ground” supposedly found near the altar of a church building. “Faith” used here involves not only the idea of standing upon the truth found in the Word of God as Jesus did during His temptations, but it also includes trusting in God. Just as David took his stand against Goliath and did not allow himself to be intimidate by the size of his opponent but he trusted in the all-powerful God. When Paul instructs the Christian soldier to put on the whole armor of God he also instructs God’s warrior to *“stand..withstand...stand”* (Eph. 6:10-13).

Know You Are Not Alone

When dealing with a real lion attack there is strength in numbers provided that everyone sticks together and someone does not run away from the group. The “herd mentality” can be most effective in dealing with the Devil’s attacks. Whatever you do, do not be separated from the herd. The stray little lambs make for an easy lunch for the lion. Some herds such as water buffalo will surround the young within a tight circle not allowing the lion to get at them. Although Christians are often attacked when alone there is nothing wrong with calling upon the brethren for help after a quick prayer to God. Many in the brotherhood have more experience in surviving these attacks from Satan.

Jesus is the Good Shepherd. He as already died for us and is stronger than Satan. A devouring Devil is not match for a defending Deity. The old Lion has already been beaten. His eternal destiny is certain (Rev. 20:10). Someone has said, “the next time the devil reminds you of your past, you remind him of his future.”

Questions:

1. How is the Devil referred to in the Bible?
2. What is the Devil like a lion?
3. What does it mean for a Christian to be sober?
4. Why is it important to be watchful?
5. How does the Devil react to strong resistance?
6. How is one to handle a lion attack? How does this relate to resist an attack from the Devil?
7. Upon what do Christian make their stand against the Devil's attacks?
8. How does one benefit from the help of fellow-saints during one of Satan's attacks?
9. What is to become of the Devil?

Peter's Postscript

1 Peter 5:10-14: 10. *But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.* 11. *To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.* 12. *By Silvanus, our faithful brother as I consider him, I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God in which you stand.* 13. *She who is in Babylon, elect together with you, greets you; and so does Mark my son.* 14. *Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to you all who are in Christ Jesus. Amen.*

As some letters end to day with a P.S. so this is Peter's postscript to his first letter. He starts with a benediction and ends with a benediction. In between these blessings are a doxology, purpose for the letter, followed by some greetings to the saints.

Benediction: Reward for Suffering

- **Suffering Saints Have a God of All Grace**

In 2 Corinthians 1:3 God is called the "*God of all comfort.*" Here He is the "*God of all grace.*" He does not say "little grace" or "some grace." Our Father is the all adequate, all providing resource of all grace. God's unmerited favor is upon all saints who suffer for Him.

- **Suffering Saints are Called to Eternal Glory**

This calling to eternal glory is by Jesus Christ for without Him and what He did for mankind there would be no unmerited favor. This passage should be well translated "*having called*" since this calling has occurred in the pass when the saints obeyed the Gospel. In fact, all Christians have been called by the preaching of the Gospel. Therefore the reason saints are saved is so that they could be saved forever in Heaven. Future glory involves present suffering.

- **Suffering Saints Only Suffer for a Short Time**

The term "*while*" means "of time, a short time, a (little) while" (Thayer 443). This is in contrast to the eternal glory. Suffering in life is temporary while glory after death is eternal. One can look forward to a relatively brief period of suffering following which there will be a never-ending glory.

- **Suffering Saints will Be Perfected by God**

The following terms are nearly synonymous. All these verbs represent what God has started in us and will continue throughout the future. Yet, God is not being redundant in this list, He has a message to convey in each term used. The word "*perfect*" means to "put into proper condition, complete, make complete" (A & G 418). The term is used of repairing a net or setting a broken bone or repair a storm battled ship. The concept is that of God perfecting the saint throughout the attacks by the Lion and the fiery trials.

- **Suffering Saints are Established By God**

The word "*establish*" is akin to the root to the term "steadfast." It literally means to set something as firm as granite. God will keep up standing firm and upright and unmoveable during times of suffering and fiery trials.

- **Suffering Saints Will Be Strengthened by God**

God is able to strengthen us through suffering. When the wind blows hard upon a growing tree it responds by becoming strongly rooted or established and thus stronger. A tree protected from high winds will be uprooted and blown over when exposed to a strong storm. Until we are stronger God will control the level of winds a saint is subjected to in trials. Saints are under the personal protection of God. This is

seen in who God controls temptation by the Devil. *“No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it”* (1 Cor. 10:13).

- **Suffering Saints Will Be Settled by God**

The concept of the Greek architectural term *“settle”* is the laying of foundation upon a rock so as to make the building secure. As in Jesus’ parable of the wise man who built his house upon the rock (Matt. 7:24-27).

When the saints endure suffering God will use these to perfect them so that no defect will remain, establish them so that nothing can knock them down, strengthen them against any adverse force, and settle them on a firm foundation from which they will not be moved.

Doxology

Peter uses at this point a doxology to express praise and glory to God for what He has done and can do for the suffering saints. First, he praises God for His eternal glory and second for His eternal dominion. The term for *“dominion”* is the Greek word *kratos* meaning strength, that is, God’s over-ruling power. Satan may be the prince of darkness and god of this world, but God is the dominate One. Ultimately He is in control.

Purpose in Writing this Epistle

It appears that this epistle was written by Silvanus for Peter. Perhaps, the content was dictated to Silvanus. As Daniel is a more formal version of Dan so Silvanus is in reference to the name Silas. This could be the Silas associated with Paul’s travels (Acts 15:22-18:5; 2 Cor. 1:19; 1 Th. 1:1; 2 Th. 1:1). He was a prophet and a Roman citizen (Acts 15:32; 16:37).

This letter of Peter contains nearly 2600 words. It is brief especially compared to the Corinthian letters. Yet this small document contains all the information needed to accomplish the purpose of the epistle.

This short epistle contains several exhortations and testimony witnessed by Peter toward the saints. It is one thing to exhort but someone like Peter had firsthand experience with Christ’s sufferings and suffering for Him.

Peter mentions the overall purpose in writing this letter to the congregations: so that they can stand in the true grace of God. He wants them to hold their ground. After all, they could fall from grace when faced with the fiery trials and sufferings.

Greetings

The first greetings are from the saints or fellow-elect in Babylon. Some believe that the literal city of Babylon is not meant. Some believe that it is in reference to Peter’s wife. However others believe that it is from the church in the city of Babylon because congregations have been referred to with feminine terms (2 John 1:1,13). Frequent disagreement has arisen over whether Babylon is the city of Mesopotamia or a Roman outpost in Egypt near Cairo or figurative reference to Rome. It is believed that John refers to Rome when speaking of Babylon in the book of Revelation. It is possible that Peter was sending greeting from the elect in actual Babylon. There were a number of Jews still living there. The great commentary on the Jewish Law is called the Babylonian Talmud. Josephus issued a special edition of his *Histories* to the Jews in Babylon.

Greetings also are sent from Mark. This may be the same Mark who was the son of Mary who lived in Jerusalem (Acts 12:12) and was a cousin of Barnabas (Col. 4:10). He was rejected by Paul for the second missionary journey, but was with Paul in Rome when the later was a prisoner (Col. 4:10). At the end of his life Paul sent for him (2 Tim. 4:11). The fact that he is referred to as Peter’s son could be literal. However, it is most likely meant in the same way Paul refers to Timothy and Titus as his son in the faith (1 Tim. 1:2; 2 Tim. 1:2).

The final greeting is a common one throughout the epistles (Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 16:20; 2 Cor. 13:12; 1 Th. 4:26). Every saint is enjoined to greet one another with a holy kiss. It has been said that in the early

church the men kissed men in greeting and women kissed women. Some Christian men of today have used this ancient tradition of greeting for a opportunity for them to kiss all the young sisters in the congregation. However, this kiss is to be "holy" in action and motive. Peter reminds the Christians not to forget to be friendly and compassionate with one another.

Benediction of Peace

Peter closed this epistle with a benediction of peace. A letter which speaks of coming fiery trials and suffering ends with a blessing wishing peace for all the saints who read it.

Ray Stedman wrote, "we come out of suffering either bitter or better." How Christians respond to and handle suffering will determine which one.

Questions:

1. How is it that God is the "*God of all grace*"?
2. How have the saints been called?
3. What does "*while*" indicate here in regard to the saint's suffering?
4. What does it mean to be "*perfected by God*"?
5. How does God establish a suffering saint?
6. How does God control temptations?
7. What is a doxology?
8. Who was Silvanus and why is he mentioned?

9. What was the purpose of this letter?

10. From where was Peter sending greetings?

11. What kind of greeting does Peter encourage among all the saints?

God's Generosity Through Knowledge

Author

2 Peter 1:1a Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ,

Dual Names

"Simon" is the name he was given at birth. "Peter" is the Greek name meaning "rock" given to him by Christ. However, he was not solid rock when an early disciple of the Lord. The name was bestowed upon him due to the hopes of the Christ in Peter. This dual designation is done so that no one can mistake who is writing this letter.

From the early days of Christianity some have questioned whether this epistle belonged in the New Testament Canon. Didymus wrote: "It must not be forgotten that this letter is spurious; it may be read in public; but it is not part of the canon of Scripture" (quoted by Barclay 285). There is also a great distinction between 1 and 2 Peter with regard to vocabulary and style. However, these can be accounted for due to the difference in subject matter. A common word like "precious" is found in both letters.

Sufficient internal evidence exist to show that Peter was the author. The author was an eyewitness to the Transfiguration of Jesus. Only Peter, James and John had this privilege (Matt. 17:1f). He makes reference to Jesus' prediction in John 21:18,19 concerning Peter's martyrdom via crucifixion. Furthermore, the writer claims to have had a personal knowledge of Paul and his work (3:15,16).

Bondservant of Jesus Christ

Peter gives two reasons for his credentials in writing this epistle. Oddly enough he begins by calling himself a slave. Slaves were on the level of domesticated work animals and tools. Many men of God are referred to as slaves or servants of God: Moses (Deut. 34:5); Joshua (24:9); David (Ps. 78:70); Paul (Rom. 1:1; Phil. 1:1); James (1:1); Jude (1:1) and Peter, who had done so before in 1 Peter 1:1.

Peter, like these other prophets and apostles, was truly a slave. He gave up his rights and self and existed for serving Jesus Christ and Him only. He had been purchased by Christ (1 Peter 1:9). He was in total submission to the will of Christ.

Apostle of Jesus Christ

An apostle was an envoy or ambassador for a king or master. Peter was one of the original twelve. He was sent out with a commission to the world, commissioned to speak the Gospel of Christ, and sent with the authority of the Christ. Who but God would send a slave to be an ambassador to the world. This letter was written by Christ's humble servant and authorized representative.

Date

It is likely that Peter's first letter was written a few years before Nero's persecution of Christians in Rome and this second one came a few later after the persecution. Thus the date of 67/68 AD will be accepted for this study.

God's Generosity Through Knowledge

2 Peter 1:1b-4: To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ: 2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus

our Lord, 3 as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, 4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

▶ **God's Justice Allots Precious Faith**

He was an apostle to the Jews, however this letter indicated that the audience may be the same as that of his first epistle in the regions of *"Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia"* (1 Peter 1:1). The churches in these areas most likely included Jews and Gentiles.

It is through the righteousness or justice of God that all had the same faith. The term *"like"* is from the Greek *isotimos* which is akin to the term used in geometry *isocetes* in reference to a triangle with two sides that are equal (iso). The term *isotimos* is a compound of two words meaning "equal" and "honor." Saints share equal honor in the faith. Notice the use of *"with us"* showing that the Christians share the same faith which the apostles had. God is not a respecter of persons. All saints have an equal faith. God does not play favorites for all believers are precious.

The word *"obtained"* comes from the Greek term whose verb form means "to obtain by lot...to receive by divine allotment, obtain" (Thayer 367). God wants all to have precious faith in Christ and has been fair in allowing all men the chance. *"Precious"* is a word common in Peter's epistles. It means that this faith is priceless and beyond value. No one can put a price tag on our faith.

Jesus is clearly referred to by Peter as God in these two verses. Notice only one definite article is used to refer to God and Jesus.

▶ **God Multiplies Grace and Peace**

God not only is just in providing faith for all but He gives *"grace"* (unmerited or undeserved favor) and *"peace"* in abundance. Jesus promised His disciples, *"peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid"* (John 14:27). No saint will have a shortage of these two blessings. However, there is a condition to this abundance of grace and peace. It is only found in the knowledge of Christ. This is not a mere academic acknowledgment of who He is, but a personal, intimate knowledge of Christ. This is a strengthened term for knowledge in the Greek: *epignosis*. It could be translated increasing or full knowledge. The more we come to know Christ the more we will come to experience an abundance of grace and peace.

▶ **God's Power Provides All Life's Provisions**

God generosity continues in that all things with regard to this spiritual life come through His divine power. Spiritual life in this fleshing realm is completely provided for by God. *"Godliness"* is a reverent attitude resulting in doing whatever is pleasing to God. It is demonstrated by the way one worships God and how one behaves in His presence. God's power supply to our lives never gives out. Just think about it: there is nothing that God has not or cannot provide for His children.

Once more these generous blessings come through our personal full knowledge of Jesus. God has provided everything. He has done His part now it is up to the saint to do his part. This Jesus has called us to this godly life. He did so by his *"glory."* When we know the great majesty of His person as the Son of God, we are encouraged to live godly. When we know the virtuousness of His perfect, courageous life we are compelled to live like Him.

▶ **God's Promises Given**

The Bible is filled with promises. God keeps them all. These are not useless or meager promises. They are *"precious"*, that is, valuable. They are great and magnificent. *"Great"* is from the same Greek term from which the English *"mega"* comes. God's promises are mega-promises.

What are these Divine promises? God has promised His children: forgiveness of sin (Acts 2:38); wisdom (Js. 1:5); protection in temptation (1 Cor. 10:13); crown of life (1 Tim. 4:8); etc. Surely, these are too big to measure and too valuable to calculate.

▶ **God's Nature Shared**

These grand and priceless promises have paved the way for the children to be blessed with partaking of the Divine Nature of God. Children of God have been born again into the kingdom of God.

Children take on the nature of their parents. A baby eagle has the same nature of its parent in regard to its appetite, behavior, environment, and association. This is why you do not see an eagle eating dirt like a worm, swimming with the sharks, nesting with vultures or gobbling with the turkeys, etc. The term "partakers" is the word for "fellowship." God's promises have resulted in us having fellowship or joint participation in His nature. This is not to say that men will become "god" as taught by some false religions.

▶ **God's Protection from Worldly Corruption**

The more a child of God is like his Father, the more He will move away from the corruption of this world. God gave us a nature by which humans have desires. He has given us laws by which to fulfill these desires in a legitimate manner. When the child of God says "yes" to his worldly lusts and "no" to God's Will he becomes corrupted. Being like God can protect one from the inward rottenness and filth. Sin causes one to be dead spiritually. Dead things rot and decay and are defiling. Just as a dead man's body deteriorates and decays so does the soul in sin.

Questions:

1. Who proof is there that Peter is the author of this letter?
2. Who all have been referred to as "servants (of slaves) of God"? Why?
3. What is an "apostle"?
4. What date is suggested for this epistle?
5. What does "*like faith*" indicate? How is it precious?
6. What is to be multiplied to the saints? How are these obtained?
7. Through what means does God provide the saints with all things?
8. How are God's promises described? What are some of these?
9. In what manner does a saint fellowship with the nature of the Divine?
10. How does God protect His children from corruption?

These Things

Adding These Things

2 Peter 1:5-7: 5 But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, 6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, 7 to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.

✓ Add With All Diligence

“Add” is a unique term in that it is not associated with math but which the *choregos* or the leader of the chorus or choirmaster. Just as some choruses may have sponsors or booster clubs or benefactors to support them. “In the great days of Athens...citizens who voluntarily took on the duty, at their own expense, of collecting, maintaining, training and quipping such choruses. ...it means lavishly to pour out everything that is necessary for a noble performance. ...it can mean to quip the soul with all the necessary virtues for life” (Barclay 298,299). If the chorus is to function and perform properly they must have certain things before the day of performance. The sponsor must add robes, musical accompaniment, advertisement, venue, etc. Any of these things not provided could result in a poor production.

The necessities which are to be provided to faith must be done with “*all diligence*.” These must be added with a sense of urgency. A supplier who will not give everything it takes to get the chorus performance off the ground is not a good supplier. A lazy or misery supplier will construct a poor production for the audience. All of these things added to faith must be operative concurrently.

✓ Add to Faith

The foundation upon which the saints are to build is “*faith*.” Faith is man’s response to God’s grace. It is a result of him weighing the evidence not seen but heard from the Word (Heb. 11:1; Rom. 10:17). Being a Christian does not involve a static, dead faith but an active, living faith (Js. 2:17-26). It must be more than just belief in a set of facts. Faith must grow and this growth is not automatic.

Lists of virtues or moral qualities were common in the Greek culture. Paul gives a list of the fruits of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22,23 (see 1 Tim. 6:11). These things are added not as steps or rungs up a ladder. Instead, they are like ingredients in a cake. All the right things must go into the mix. Faith is like the bowl. Faith is like a chess board where all the pieces must be brought alongside in their place every time the game is played.

✓ Add Virtue

The first thing that needs to be added with all sense of urgency to one’s faith is “*virtue*.” It is from the Greek word *arete*. It means goodness or moral excellence, manliness as in being a real man, courage of a soldier to stand and fight and be heroic regardless of his fear. It is the courage displayed by Peter and John when facing the Jewish leaders who commanded them to stop preaching Jesus (Acts 4:9,20; 5:29).

The Greeks would use this term to describe the heroic deeds by the gods. To the Greek philosophers it involves the highest of moral standards which man only would acquire as a noble idea. Plato uses it often as does the New Testament. A sense of efficiency is seen in the term. Land that is able to produce good crops is said to be virtuous. It is the type of good soil which will allow their faith to grow.

✓ Add Knowledge

Knowledge, like faith, is not static. Knowledge is meant to grow and grow. Both faith and knowledge are compatible. Paul mentioned his certain knowledge and absolute trust in Christ in 1 Tim. 1:12b: “*I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.*” It is not the impersonal collection of facts. In 1 Peter 3:7 it is used in the command

for husbands to “know” their wives. Christians need to know the facts and know the Lord personally to wisely deal with day to day life. Knowledge enables the saint to discern between right and wrong. To understand the Lord’s life and desires well enough to know what Jesus would do.

✓ **Add Self-Control**

Solomon wrote, “*he who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city*” (Prov. 16:32) and “*whoever has no rule over his own spirit is like a city broken down, without walls*” (Prov. 25:28). Also translated “temperance” referring to the mastering of desires. Learning to say “no” to fleshly indulgences even if they are not sinful in and of themselves. Like an athlete in training who gets a grip on his appetites and habits. Paul greatly troubled the Roman Governor Felix when he preached to him about self-control (Acts 24:25). He was living in an adulterous relationship with Drucilla.

✓ **Add Perseverance**

The word “*perseverance*” is the idea of bearing up under a heavy load. It can also be translated “patience” or “steadfastness” or “endurance.” With perseverance the Christian will never “give up” or “give in.” James claims that trials produce patience (1:2-8). Fidelity in the face of adversity as when Jesus endured the shame and pain of the cross (12:2).

✓ **Add Godliness**

The Greeks of the day often used this term for religion. It is reverence or piety expressed in worshiping God correctly (John 4:23,24). The correct attitude toward God and consequently others. As it in the first and second commandments which are to love God and to love one’s neighbor.

✓ **Add Brotherly Love**

Next, Peter tells them to bring along side self-control, brotherly love. This term is from the Greek *philadelphia*. It is a compound term with *philos* meaning an emotional love or feeling of closeness and *adelphos* meaning “brother” which originally means from out of the same womb. Thus Christians are to love each other because we are born of the same seed, the Word of God. Christ set a higher standard for this love of one another. “*A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another*” (Jn. 13:34,35). Paul wrote, “*be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another*” (Rom. 12:10). Such kindness to fellow-brethren demonstrates that one has indeed been born of God (1 John 4:20,21; 5:1,2).

✓ **Add Love**

Paul claims that *agape* love is the highest virtue. “*And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love*” (1 Cor. 13:13). “When we have brotherly love, we love because of our likenesses to others; but with *agape* love, we love in spite of the differences we have” (Wiersbe 439). This love is given to other regardless of the recipient’s feelings or the emotions of the giver. Love does not take into account worthiness (Rom. 5:6-8). This is a love that is willing to die for one’s enemies. It is the love one has for God that motivates them always to obey every command (1 Jn. 5:3).

As the choirmaster of one’s faith the saint creates a melody well pleasing to God and one that will ring throughout eternity.

Power of These Things

2 Peter 1:8-11: 8 For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. 10 Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; 11 for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

God has generously supplied the things needed for their precious faith and knowledge. They were to diligently supply that faith so it could grow. Peter refers to the seven moral qualities in verses five

through seven as “*these things*.” If they have these added alongside of one another and these things have kept on increasing, then several blessing will result. In order to have a strong healthy productive faith it must be continuously supplied with these vital virtues.

- **Not Barren**

“*Barren*” is also translated “useless.” It is from the Greek *argos* meaning “lazy, shunning the labor which one ought to perform” (Thayer 72). Laziness with regard to spiritual growth equals eternal death. Remember how Jesus curse the barren fig tree?

- **Not Unfruitful**

A lack of supplies will put one’s faith out of work. Inactive faith is unproductive or “*unfruitful*.” The term is used by Paul in Ephesians 5:11 to refer to the “*unfruitful works of darkness*.” In the parable of the sower Jesus tells of the soil which has weeds which will grow up and choke out the word resulting in unfruitfulness. No good deeds can come from a faith has not been well supplied. Faithfully supplying faith results in benefitting from one’s knowledge and relationship in Christ (John 15:5,6).

- **Not Shortsighted to the Point of Blindness**

The Christian walks by faith, not by sight (2 Cor. 5:7). If his faith is not thoroughly supplied it will not be able to see. At first he is “short-sighted.” In order to counteract his nearsightedness one will squint. A saint who shuts his eyes or blinks may eventually become blind. Satan, the god of this world, wants to blind the Christian (2 Cor. 4:3,4). They are like the church at Laodicean “*poor, blind, and naked*.” Spiritual blindness was resolved by faith but with a weak faith it will return. A Christian’s spiritual vision can get to the point where he can only see the near and now not the eternal, the carnal not the spiritual. Paul indicated that he was able to maintain good vision by focusing on the things ahead and not on the past (Phil. 3:10f).

- **Not Forgetful of One’s Cleansing from Sin**

The term “*cleansed*” is from the same Greek term from which comes the English words “cathartic.” A weak faith fails to remember their purification of sin. A Christian became a believer at the point of obeying God’s command to be baptized to wash away his sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Mk. 16:16). Peter indicates that a starving faith can deteriorate to the point that one has forgotten that God has cleansed him of his sins. Just like spiritual blindness, a weak faith will cause spiritual amnesia. How could a Christian forget his past condition in sin and the great salvation brought to Him through the love and sacrifice of God’s Son? Yet this will be the result of those to do not give their all in keeping their faith plentifully furnished with “*these things*.”

- **Calling and Election Sure**

Peter again calls the saints to be diligent or zealous as he did in verse five. God has called all men through the preaching of the Gospel to enter into the Kingdom of light out of a kingdom of darkness which left them blind and in sin (2 Thess. 2:13,14). Election is a term which Calvinism has corrupted in order to support the false doctrine that God unconditionally elected specific individuals to eternal life before the world began. God determined that all those who are in Christ will be the elect. God determined or chose the location of election not the individual souls who are to be elected. This passage demonstrates that the individual must to his part to determine the outcome of this calling and election. As Paul wrote, “*therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling*” (Phil. 2:12).

- **Never Stumble**

When a Christian has been given every effort to support the outcome of his calling and election as a sure or certain thing, he will by no means “*stumble*” or fall from grace. Yes, a Christian can weaken their faith to the point they fall from grace. Again Paul warned, “*you have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace*” (Gal. 5:4). The idea here is that of one on a journey walking home or marching off to war. As long as he is well-equipped and gives his all, he will not be left behind or fail to arrive at his destination.

- **Abundant Entrance into the Eternal Kingdom**

Just as one richly supplies his faith (1:5) and continues to do so abundantly, so a God will

abundantly (1:8) supply his entrance into heaven. The Greeks used this expression to show the kind of welcoming home that was given to a crowned athlete or a victorious general and his army. Imagine the welcoming words of God when He tells the faithful at judgment, *“well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord”* (Matt. 25:21). Such a future should encourage every saint to make every effort.

Remember These Things

2 Peter 1:12-15: 12 For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. 13 Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you, 14 knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me. 15 Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease.

Man can be a very forgetful creature. He needs to be constantly reminded. Much of teaching and preaching is to put people in remembrance of the things they have previously been taught. How many times has a parent rebuked a child by asking, “Haven’t I told you a thousand times, not to....?” only to have the child claim, “but I forgot.”

■ **Reminding Because of Its Importance**

“These things” which are to be diligently supplied to one’s faith are way to important to be forgotten. Perhaps this is why God has supplied man with three synoptic Gospels which tell the story of Christ’s life, death, and resurrection from three points of view. Remembrance will result in eternal life.

■ **Reminding To Build on Foundation of Knowledge**

A man’s memory can be imperfect and selective. Once some truth has been established in their minds and in their way of life it can be forgotten again if no one has reminded them. Peter is not teaching anything new, he is merely wanting to keep refreshing their memories of the truths which has been established in the past.

■ **Reminding To Awake the Lethargic Mind**

The Greek word for *“stir”* is the same used in John 6:18 for a actions of a storm. It is the idea of awakening or arousing. Lazy minds which do not rehearse these things will soon forget them.

■ **Reminding Because Life is Short**

Peter refers to his life on earth as a soul inhabiting a tent (2 Cor. 5:1,2). On earth a Christian is like a nomad who pitches his tent here and there as he is just passing through. Peter knew he was going to die. He may have not known exactly when, but he did know how. It was coming *“shortly”* meaning it was imminent. Jesus told John, *“most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish.” This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God”* (John 21:18,19). Some believe the language here implies imprisonment ending in crucifixion. Eusebius records the tradition that Peter at his request was crucified upside down (Ecclesiastical History, 3:1,30).

■ **Reminding To Teach Future Generations**

Peter uses the word *exodus* translated here *“decease.”* He was about to exit this world, yet he wants to continue to remind them of the promise land. God gave Israelites the Passover feast to remind them year by year of their exodus out of Egypt. Just as a weak faith can result in one forgetting they were cleansed of their sins, so Peter wants to leave them with something so they will always remember their deliverance out of sin as he is to be delivered out this world.

The word *“ensure”* is the same as *“diligence”* in verse five. Peter will do his part as he has demanded that they do their part in strengthening their faith. Whether or not one remembers Peter is not as important as one being reminded of the knowledge of Christ. Peter desire for future generations to be reminded of *“these things”* has been fulfilled in the preservation of his epistles in the New Testament. After all, *“this letter”* was written to them as a way of reminder (3:1).

Often bankers will wonder whether their financial investments will pay off in the future. Those students going to college may be concerned that at their tuition and diligent study will one day land them a good job and help further their career. A man will start a business and work hard and give it his all and then something beyond his control will destroy everything he worked for. There is one thing in this world that if you work diligently and supply it liberally, it will pay off for all eternity: faith.

Questions:

1. What does “add” mean in this context?
2. What is the foundation upon which these things are to be supplied?
3. Matching:
___ virtue a. courageous moral excellence
___ knowledge b. giving ones best to others without regard to feelings
___ self-control c. bearing up under a heavy load
___ perseverance d. affectionate feelings toward another
___ godliness e. personal understanding of something or someone
___ brotherly love f. reverent attitude toward God
___ love g. mastery over desires
4. What does “barren” mean?
5. T F Peter says that a healthy faith is blind.
6. When did their cleaning take place?
7. How are saints “called” and what is their “election”?
8. When Peter says they will “never stumble” is he teaching “once saved, always saved”? Explain.
9. What does the word “stir” imply?
10. What did Peter know about his death? Why did this motivate him to remind the saints?

Knowledge Through Scripture

2 Peter 1:16-22: 16 For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. 17 For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." 18 And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. 19 And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; 20 knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, 21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

Peter had just expressed the great need for constant, continual reminders of the truth to the saints. Now he introduces the reason for this need with the term "for."

▶ **Scripture is Not From Myths**

The written words are not a collection of fables or myths (from the Greek word *muthos* from which the English term *myth* is derived). The Gospel is not just a "cleverly devised" or sophisticated fabrication of from talented human minds. It is true that there were fabricated stories in connection with the events recorded in scripture. Many of the Jewish apocryphal and pseudopigraphal writings of the Jews and Gnostic writings of the second and third centuries such as The Gospel of Thomas are of this sort. Paul warned both Timothy and Titus to avoid these. "Nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith. ... But reject profane and old wives' fables, and exercise yourself toward godliness" (1 Timothy 1:4, 4:7). "And they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables" (2 Tim. 4:4). "Not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men who turn from the truth" (Tit. 1:4). In fact, the term "fables" is always used to denote something negative in the New Testament. Many liberal scholars have attacked the divine inspiration of the Bible by making such claims. The Bible is not fiction. It is not on the level of the mythology of the Greeks and Romans. Its is not a made up story like that of the writing of Mark Twain or Charles Dickens. This does not mean that it does not use various figures of speech known as fables or hyperboles.

▶ **Scripture is Preached**

Peter and the rest of the inspired writers have preached the "power and coming of" Christ. The "power" of Christ is most likely His miraculous birth, ministry, resurrection, and ascension. The "coming" is in reference to the second coming. These too are not to be regarded as fiction.

▶ **Scripture is From Eyewitness Accounts**

Removing the scriptures from the genre of fiction one must give veracity for it being a recording of factual events. Peter mentions that the source of the information written in scripture is not from second hand material. He mentions the Transfiguration where he along with James and John were eye-witnesses of that great event. It is recorded by the synoptic Gospels in Matthew 17:1-8; Mark 9:2-8; Luke 9:23-36).

The disciples saw with their eyes the Lord's majesty, glory, and honor. *"He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light"* (Matt. 17:2). *"His clothes became shining, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them"* (Mark 9:3). These were not given to Jesus from men but came from God the Father. The *"majesty"* is the divine nature of Jesus as God. The *"glory"* of this event was seen as a brilliant light shone upon Christ. Jesus was seen with the Old Testament greats Moses and Elijah. Moses representing the Law and Elijah the prophets. Jesus fulfilled all that the Law and the prophets wrote about Him (Lk. 24:27). Jesus is greater than these two. He was given the *"honor of one who outranks others, pre-eminence"* (Thayer 624). He is the Son of God and no one else has His status or radiant splendor.

▶ **Scripture is From Divine Witness**

Not only was Peter and others eye-witnesses but also ear-witnesses of the glory and deity of Christ. This event clearly demonstrated that Jesus was the Son of God. Be sure to note that Peter was not the only one who saw and heard the events on the mountain. Whereas one disciple may have a hallucination but not three men seeing and hearing the same vision at the same time.

The voice the disciples heard from heaven was from God the Father referred to here as *Excellent Glory*. He said, *"this is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!"* (Matt. 17:5b). God also spoke of His relationship and approval of Jesus when He said about Christ baptism, *"You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"* (Mark 1:11).

The mount where the Transfiguration is said to have taken place is either Mt. Tabor or Mt. Hermon according to scholars. Mark said they went *"up a high mountain"* (9:20). Mt. Hermon is more likely since it is only fourteen miles from Caesarea Philippi where the prior events of the Gospel of Matthew had just taken place.

▶ **Scripture is Sure**

Not everyone had the privilege of both seeing and hearing the events of the Transfiguration. This by no means keeps the readers of the scriptures from having confidence in the truthfulness of the Gospel message. There is also the testimony of the prophetic words recorded in the Old Testament. It contains over three hundred prophecies about the Coming Christ. It is beyond belief that one mere man could ever have fulfilled all of these in a short life time. Such a feat would be mathematically and logically impossible.

▶ **Scripture is to Be Studied**

Since the scriptures are so sure the saints should pay attention to them. This is not a mere academic approach to the scriptures where a scholar uses the Bible as a mere textbook. Instead it is to be used as a guide book for living a spiritual life on earth and a road map to get to heaven.

▶ **Scripture is Shining**

The phrase *"as a light that shines"* uses the Greek term *phosphoros* for *"light."* It is used to describe the *"day star"* or *"Morning Star"* a reference to Venus which is really a planet not a star. It is so called because it precedes the rising of the sun. The term is also used by the Greeks in reference to their kings. The darkness of the heart can be exposed by the light of the Word, this will take place until a *"day star"* shines within the heart. Some believe this to be a reference to the Second Coming of Christ. However, it is more likely that it refers to the effect of Christ as the light bearer enlightening the dark heart. The Bible has the ability to dispel the darkness of ignorance and sin within the heart. As the Psalmist wrote, *"Your word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path"* (Ps. 119:105).

▶ **Scripture is Not Humanly Conceived**

"Knowing this first" tells the students of scripture that the very first thing they must understand about the Bible is its actual source.

Is Peter forbidding and student or reader of the scriptures to use their own intellect in

reaching a determination concerning the thought a certain passage is teaching? The Catholic church uses this very passage to teach that no one has the ability to understand using their own intellect any passage of scripture. They must rely upon the church or pope in order to understand the meaning of any scripture. This issue is the subject of discussion in a Knights of Columbus booklet: "Can any intelligent person read and interpret and understand for himself? ...the answer is definitely 'No?'" (The Bible is a Catholic Book 22). Peter is not prohibiting Bible Study in fact he had just encouraged them to pay attention to the scriptures.

The word "private" is from the Greek *idias* meaning "one's own." The Greek term *epilouseos* is translated here as "interpretation." This is a most unfortunate translation of the word, not that it is inherently the wrong word, but that it conveys the wrong meaning to most readers. Some thus take this passage to teach one not to study the scriptures so as to explain the meaning. If the Holy Spirit wanted Peter to convey this meaning, he would have chosen the Greek words *disnoigo* or *diermeneuo*. Instead Peter used the Greek term *epilysis*, is the idea of a loosening or unloosening. The idea is the revelation of God's Word. Man did not come up with the written words by on his own. God revealed these words to him so he could write them down. The word "is" shines light of this misunderstanding. It means to become or spring into being. The point of the passage is not forbidding someone from reading and being able to communicate what it means, but to show that the source of every scripture is from God.

Verse twenty-one makes the meaning of "private interpretation" very clear when it says: "for prophecy never came by the will of man." In fact, this is the very indication of a false prophet. "Thus says the Lord of hosts: 'Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you. They make you worthless; They speak a vision of their own heart, Not from the mouth of the Lord'" (Jer. 23:16). Consider Balaam who sought to be rewarded with the gold from the King of Moab by prophesying a curse upon the children of Israel. He wanted to proclaim a curse, but God would only permit him to speak a blessing.

▶ **Scripture is Spirit Given**

The Greek word for "Spirit" in this passage is from the Greek word *pneuma* meaning "wind." Paul wrote, "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim. 3:16a). The Scripture are inspired (*theopneustos* meaning literally, God-breathed). The term moved is used by Luke in Acts 27:15,17 to show how the wind would move a ship in across the water by filling its sails. The Holy Spirit acts as the breath of God in moving the prophets to write down the very words God wanted in the scriptures. This is the *Plenary-Verbal Theory* of inspiration. All the parts and words of the Bible are from the direction of God through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the Bible contains no false teaching even in regard to historical, scientific or prophetic statements. Paul describes the process of the revelation of the Word or mystery of God's plan of salvation in the Gospel. "By which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ, which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets" (Eph. 3:4,5).

God did not use man as if he were some kind of mechanical robotic recorder lack a mind or personality of his own. Using the writing ability and experiences and vocabulary of the writer God authored through the Holy Spirit the very words used in scripture. The fact that the Bible is The Book is because of its overall unity. All forty writers over 3500 years in three languages wrote down the sixty-six different books by the guidance of one Author. This is why the Scripture are certainly trustworthy as the very Word from God.

Questions:

1. T F Scriptures are not fables or myths. All the stories and statements of the Bible are

based on factual events.

2. Who was at the Transfiguration of Jesus?
3. What does “honor” mean as it is applied here to Jesus?
4. What did the disciples hear at the Transfiguration?
5. In what way is the prophetic word “sure”?
6. How is it that scriptures shine like the Morning Star?
7. Is Peter forbidding and student or reader of the scriptures to use their own intellect in reaching a determination concerning the thought a certain passage is teaching?
8. What does the phrase “private interpretation” mean?
9. How did the “*Spirit*” move the prophets?
10. What is the *Plenary-Verbal Theory* of inspiration?

False Prophets Will Not Profit, Part 1

This epistle along with Jude gives us one of the most explicit details concerning the disposition of false prophets and the most graphic description of the destruction of false teachers.

False Prophets' Characteristics

2 Peter 2:1- 3a: 1 But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. 2 And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. 3 By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words;...

- **Existing Throughout History**

False prophets have always been a problem for God's people. The Israelites had to be careful. They were among themselves and others arose from paganism. The Law is filled with warnings concerning false prophets and the need to expose and execute them (Deut. 13:1-5; 18:20-22).

- **Operating Among the Churches**

As Paul warned the elders of Ephesus at Miletus there will arise in the congregation and even among the elders, false teachers. *"For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves"* (Acts 20:29-30). Peter is concerned with those teachers who are in the midst of the congregations, many of them were members.

- **Smuggling In Divisive Opinions**

These *"heresies"* were personal choices or opinions. The phrase *"secretly bring in"* is from a Greek work meaning "to smuggle." This is parallel to what is said in Jude 1:4. False teachers will rarely expose their true intentions. They sneak in their opinions and place them along side the Truth as if they belong. Anyone who falls for this trick and accepts these opinions of men as Truth will be brought down to utter ruin. They can be so destructive because they are so divisive. These teachers come in and encourage the members to pick sides when it comes to opinions.

- **Denying the Lord's Redemption**

The word *"bought"* could just as well be translated "redeemed." This shows that not only are these false teachers operating within the congregation of believers, but they have been redeemed like the rest of the congregation (1 Peter 1:19). A lord or master would redeem a slave and set him free. The extreme continual denial of these false prophets is seen in the ingratitude of not recognizing the great grace shown to the former slave by the master or lord.

- **Bringing Swift Destruction**

Although the destruction of the false teachers will not be immediate it will certainly come and its suddenness may take them by surprise. This swift destruction Peter illustrates later with the judgment of the Flood coming upon the antediluvians *"and as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all"* (Luke 17:27,27). He also exemplifies this sudden destruction with the example of Sodom and Gomorrah *"likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; 29 but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all"* (Luke 17:28,29).

The idea behind this destruction is not annihilation but complete ruin.

- **Deceiving Many**

Jesus warned that many would follow the way that leads to destruction. *“Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it”* (Matt. 7:13,14). False teachers are popular and effective in getting people to follow the way to destruction because they appeal to the majority, to immorality, and licentiousness (sinning without restraint).

The destructive ways are from the Greek term *aselgeiais* (licentiousness) referring to the extreme sexual lewdness they are willing to practice openly as if they had a licence to so sin. They may have been teaching a very popular view of Epicureanism and later Gnosticism which permitted one to give themselves over to their fleshly appetites without restraint or fear of punishment.

- **Blaspheming the Way of Truth**

When the saints start following these false teachers in the *“destructive ways”* of lewd behavior the *“way of truth”* is maligned or defamed before the rest of the faithful and even before the world. This blasphemy may be directed toward Christ who is the Truth (John 14:6). Bad behavior of Christian can discredit the Truth before the world. Bringing hateful and harmful attitudes expressed against Christianity was a real concern in the first century in regard to the behavior of servants toward masters, younger women (Tit. 2:4,5), and here, the saints who follow false teaching.

- **Coveting**

The word *“covetousness”* is from *plenexia* which is also translated greed. The motive of many false teachers the need to satisfy their greed (see 1 Tim. 6:3-5). Religion has always been a fertile recruiting ground for both greedy hucksters and their materialistic followers. It is said of the self-assured spiritual leaders of ancient Israel, *“her heads judge for a bribe, her priests teach for pay, and her prophets divine for money. Yet they lean on the Lord, and say, ‘Is not the Lord among us? No harm can come upon us’”* (Micah 3:11). Contrast their motive with Jesus and His disciples who were poor. Although there is nothing wrong with receiving wages for proclaiming the truth (1 Cor. 9:14) it is wrong to take wages for proclaiming lies and doing it with the motive of covetousness.

- **Exploiting with False Words**

Akin in the idea of false teachers being motivated by their greed is a term which is from the ancient business world of the first century. *“Exploit”* is from the Greek word *emporeuomai* from which the English word *“emporium”* is derived (Js. 4:13). It refers to a market in which a variety of merchandise is sold. False teachers unlike faithful shepherds who protect the sheep, desire only to fleece the flock. They love to make merchandise of the disciples. When they see a Christian they see an opportunity to satisfy their greed as they see women as a means to satisfy their sexual lusts (2:14).

The means used by the false prophets to exploit Christians is deceptive words. *“Deceptive”* or *“false”* comes from the same Greek word from which the English word *“plastic”* comes. Plastic goods have a means of deceiving the eye in that they are at a glance perceived to be something they are not. Something craftily made out of plastic could look like real wood, metal, china, etc. Just as a crooked, greedy salesman might sell a product as being made from genuine wood or silver or fine porcelain, they exploit them out of the true monetary value by selling something that is fake or plastic.

“The false teachers use our vocabulary, but they do not use our dictionary” (Wiersbe 447). It is easy to exploit with words when one person or the Bible defines a term one way while the false teacher defines it his way. They are like their Father the Devil (Jn. 8:44) who was a liar from the beginning when he equivocated by telling Eve she would not die. The more deceptive the lie the more likely its will be effective in exploiting the gullible souls of materialistic Christians.

False Prophets’ Judgement

2 Peter 2:3a-9: ...for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber. 4 For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; 5 and did not spare the ancient world, but

saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly; 6 and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly; 7 and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked 8 (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds)— 9 then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment,

■ **Judgment Upon Them is Certain**

The judgement has already been pronounced on all those who are false teachers. It is not “idle” or lingers or loiters for a long time. Destruction is personified as a hangman who has not fallen asleep on the job. To make this point Peter gives examples from the cosmic realm, the world as a whole, and a localized area.

■ **Sure Judgement Upon Angels**

Angels although created a little higher than man, are still subject to the Creator. In their original condition they were like man in that they have a free will and were morally good.

Who were these sinning angels? Some hold the view that they were the angels who rebellion with Satan against God before the beginning or creation. They will appeal to Isaiah 14:12-15 and point to the fall of Lucifer. However, as the contexts will clearly show Isaiah was not speaking of Satan but of the king of Babylon after his decease. Satan is never referred to as “Lucifer” in the Bible. Others go to Genesis 6:1-4 as the background for this event. It is said that the “*sons of God*” are angels who came to earth to have sex with the “*daughters of men*” and thus producing a race of powerful, wicked men. However, the context does not mention anything about angels. Furthermore, Jesus said concerning those men and women who go to heaven, “*for in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven*” (Matt. 22:30).

The phrase “*cast them down to hell*” is translated from a single Greek word *tartaros* which means “to cast into Tartarus.” According to Greek mythology this is part of the realm of Hades where Zeus cast the evil Titans and subsequently all the evil to be punished. Later, this term was used in Jewish apocalyptic literature. So where did Peter get His information about sinful angels and Tartarus? As did all the inspired apostles and prophets of the New Testament, he received this knowledge through the Holy Spirit (John 16:13). Perhaps, tartarus is where the rich man was in torment when he was talking with Abraham in Jesus parable.

These fallen angels have been delivered (i.e., turned over for imprisonment) into “*chains of darkness*.” Some translations read “pits of darkness.” This apparent disagreement is due the fact that the words “chain” and “pit” are *seira* and *seiros* respectively. A scribe may have simply misspelled the word when copying. If this passage is parallel to Jude 6 which has these angels “*reserved in everlasting chains under darkness*,” then “chains” is what is most likely meant here by Peter.

The point of this illustration is to show that just as sure as God certainly punished these angels He will pass judgment upon the false prophets of the last age.

■ **Sure Judgement Upon Ancient World**

Noah and his family lived in a very wicked world. It took some 120 years for the ark to be prepared. During this time righteous Noah was preaching righteousness. He was not very productive in that he was only able to save his wife, three sons, and their wives.

God sent a flood upon the wicked of Noah’s generation. The Greek word used here is the same word from which the English language derives the term “cataclysm.” Surely, it was a cataclysmic event. God destroyed all the wicked leaving only eight souls rescued from judgment. So, if God judged millions or perhaps billions of sinful souls in the days of Noah, He will in like manner bring to utter ruin the false prophets of Peter’s day.

■ **Sure Judgment Upon Sodom and Gomorrah**

The story of Sodom and Gomorrah’s destruction (catastrophe) is found in Genesis 19. So wicked were the cities of the plain that they are used nearly two dozen times in the Bible (both Old and New

Testaments) to exemplify great wickedness Jesus warned the people of Capernaum, “*but I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you*” (Matt. 11:24; cf. Is. 1:9; 3:9; 13:19; Jer. 23:14; 49:18; 50:40; Ezek. 16:48,49; Hos. 11:8; Amos 4:11; Zeph. 2:9; Matt. 10:14,15; 11:23,24; Lk. 17:28-32). The inhabitants were so wicked that ten righteous souls could not be found.

So complete was this destruction that these cities no longer existed. Archeologists believe they were in the location now covered by water in the southern portion of the Dead Sea.

The citizens of the cities of the plains were ripe for Divine judgment. “*The men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and sinful against the Lord*” (Gen. 13:13). God Told Abraham, “*because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grave*” (Gen. 18:20). Lot’s soul was in torment or vexed. It was pure torture to see and hear the outrages conduct of these men who lacked any restraint when it come to their sexual lusts. Jude indicates that it was their homosexual behavior that is the main issue about their immorality (Jude 1:7). In fact to this day a homosexual is referred by some as sodomites. These perverted men not only rejected Lot’s virgin daughters but after they had been struck blind they still tried to find the door to get into Lot’s home.

Lot was distressed by the people’s “licentiousness” also translated “lasciviousness.” This unrestrained sexual behavior is called “*lawless.*” Not because it violate the Law of Moses for it had not yet been given. Apparently God has condemned homosexuality from the very beginning (Gen. 2:21-24; Lev. 18:22; Rom. 1:24-27; 1 Cor. 6:9). Lot’s mind or soul was continually tortured “day by day” in what he kept on seeing and hearing. One of the surest ways to avoid being caught up in the vices of this world is to maintain a serious revulsion and shame over it. The Christian of today does not seem to be tormented by the wickedness of our day. Perhaps we are either too far removed from the wicked or we have hardened our heart by too much familiarity with the ungodliness we are exposed to through the media and our fellowship with the kingdom of darkness. Claiming that seeing and hearing wickedness today without it troubling one’s sense of righteousness is by no means a sign of either maturity in Christ or great strength of character. It is in fact just the opposite and a sure sign that something is dangerously wrong with the spiritual condition of such Christians. Those who are no longer shocked by the sinfulness of sin are vulnerable to sin.

Three times in this passage Lot is refer to as “righteous.” This in no way means that he was sinless. Much of what is known of him shows him not to be very right and godly. He chose to pitch is tent toward Sodom (Gen. 13:12). He chose to move his family into the wicked city (Gen. 14:12). He even went back to Sodom after Abraham had first rescued him. He offered his two virgin daughters to the perverted men attacking his home and the angelic guest. He had to be pulled by the hand by an angel to be removed from Sodom so its destruction could take place (Gen. 19:16). He later became drunk. His daughters were so morally influenced by living in Sodom they were willing to commit incest just have children. He has at least two other daughters and their husbands who laughed at Lot when he tried to get them to leave Sodom. Yet, compared to the men of Sodom the Holy Spirit says he was “righteous.”

■ **Righteous Rescued Out of Trial**

With the word “*then*” Peter concludes the “*for if*” point he had begun to make with regard to the fallen angels, the wicked destroyed by the flood, and the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah who were consumed by fire. The righteous can rest assured in the ability of God to know (fully know) how to handle both the wicked and the faithful in regard to future judgment. Both Noah and Lot survived the trials of living righteously while surrounded by some of the most wicked men and women in the history of mankind. Today’s faithful can still rest in the knowledge of God’s ability to rescue us. “*Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth*” (Rev. 3:10). The good life in Christ is not risk-free or trial-free but it does come with a guarantee.

Although grace is seen in how God spared Lot and Noah in this trial, God is also just in condemning the unrighteous to punishment. Just as the God of heaven rewards the faithful, He is still a God of justice who punishes the wicked.

■ **Unrighteous Reserved For Judgment**

Just as certain as God knows how to save the righteous through judgment and trials, He knows how

to reserve the wicked for punishment.

Is this punishment only in the future after the Day of Judgment? Is there a sense in which these punished souls who died in the flood and in the incineration of the cities of the plain being held in Tartarus awaiting their final sentence? Certainly Jesus tells of the rich man being in a place of torment while Lazarus was in a place of comfort (Luke 16:23,24).

False Prophets' Characteristics Continued

2 Peter 2:10,11: 10 and especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority. They are presumptuous, self-willed. They are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries, 11 whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord.

Peter resumes his detailed description of the flawed character of false prophets. In contrast to the sinful angels, the generation destroyed by the flood, and the sodomites, Peter points to the just reasons for judgment to come upon the current generation of false teachers.

◆ Walking in Lust of the Flesh

The first reason for singling out false prophets for judgment is their sexual promiscuity. Perhaps Peter is also referencing the deviant sexual immorality so common then and even today. Many of the pagan religions involved temple prostitutes both male and female. At Corinth the Greek goddess of love, Aphrodite, was worshiped by means of fornication (1 Cor. 6:12-20). Even today, many false religions and cults like that of David Koresh who was known to have “married” young girls, like Islam where Allah permitted all Muslims to have up to four wives and Muhammad the prophet as many as he likes, and the many denominational pastors who are sexual predators among the female sheep in the flock.

Although man is flesh and spirit and the flesh is not inherently evil, these teachers ignore the needs of the spirit and indulge the wants of the flesh. Of these Paul wrote, “*whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things*” (Phil. 3:19).

◆ Despising Authority

“*Authority*” here means simply “*lordship*.” Some think this refer to angels or church leaders or Christ or the government. Perhaps it is used in a general way to reference anyone that is over them. They actually are blaspheming dignitaries.

Their despising of all authority shows that these false teachers are “*presumptuous*” or “*bold*” or “*daring*” and “*self-willed*” or self-centered. This is a continuous action of looking down upon them as if these false prophets are superior and therefore exempt from giving heed to their authority. This is done with a head strong and self-gratifying attitude. “*A proud and haughty man— ‘Scoffer’ is his name; he acts with arrogant pride*” (Prov. 21:24).

Peter points out the magnitude of their anti-authoritarianism by pointing out that the angels who stand before God would not even dare to be so brazen as to pass condemnation upon them. And making the false teachers’ arrogance worse is the fact that these angels are superior to them in regard to their creation and righteousness and station. Some believe that this idea is exemplified in Jude 9: “*yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, ‘The Lord rebuke you!’*” Although the context mentions angels it is hard to reconcile with the rest of the Bible the idea of the false prophets are blaspheming both the authority of fallen angels and also the good angels.

Man is easily tempted to rebel against any authority. Children rebel against the authority of their parents (Eph. 6:1-4). Employees rebel against the authority of their bosses (Eph. 6:5-8). Members of the congregation will rebel against the leadership (Heb. 13:7,17). God gave these authorities as a blessing to man to give him the freedom to worship God and serve Him. Instead of rebelling they ought to pray and obey (1 Tim. 2:1-8). In Peter’s previous epistle he encouraged the saints to be submissive citizens in honoring the king and all authorities of men (1 Peter 2:13-17).

Truly, this passage shows that the God of the Old Testament was one of vengeance and wrath punishing the wicked and one of great grace in delivering the righteous. He is the same God of the New Testament according to Peter. He still knows how to save the righteous and punish the wicked. The issue is not whether God is the same in the New Testament as the one described in the Old, but whether or not the saints of today are righteous like those of old.

Questions:

1. Where were these false teachers operating?
2. Who had redeemed them? What does this indicate?
3. Give Bible illustrations of God sending swift destruction.
4. What is the result of saints following after these false teachers?
5. What was the motive of these false teachers?
6. What do false prophets use to exploit Christians?
7. T F The sinning angels whom God punished were those who rebelled with Lucifer.
8. Why does the Bible refer so often to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah?
9. Why was Lot's soul so tormented? Should we be like Lot today?
10. How many times is Lot referred to as "righteous" in this passage?
11. What are the two points Peter was making when he gave the three examples of God's punishment?
12. What two reasons are given for God's just punishment on the false teachers?

False Prophets Will Not Profit, Part 2

“False living produced by false teaching results in inevitable destruction” (Shelly 105). Peter describes the false teachers’ reward in six ways in verse twelve through seventeen. He also lists the wickedness for which they will bring this destruction upon themselves. These wicked characteristics of the false prophets could well be summed up by their immorality, greed, and lies.

False Prophets’ Rewards For Unrighteousness

2 Peter 2:12-17: 12 But these, like natural brute beasts made to be caught and destroyed, speak evil of the things they do not understand, and will utterly perish in their own corruption, 13 and will receive the wages of unrighteousness, as those who count it pleasure to carouse in the daytime. They are spots and blemishes, carousing in their own deceptions while they feast with you, 14 having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin, enticing unstable souls. They have a heart trained in covetous practices, and are accursed children. 15 They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; 16 but he was rebuked for his iniquity: a dumb donkey speaking with a man’s voice restrained the madness of the prophet. 17 These are wells without water, clouds carried by a tempest, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.

- **Ruined by Own Corruption**

In the beginning God gave man dominion over all the animals. Yet these false prophets have become like them. Due to their lack of self-restraint they are like animals who are lured into a trap by the appetites of the flesh. As a result the animal is killed as it rushes mindlessly for the bait without thought of the danger. This is not an attempt by Peter to belittle animals. They operate on the basis of innate instincts instead of using rational thought processes to make decisions. They were born to be this way. The false teachers have become this way due to a failure to think like a rational human being should. These prophets also are ruined by the corrupt way they speak. They revile things before they have a proper understanding of them. Today false teachers will accuse New Testament Christians of believing in “water salvation” or not being “campbellites.” If they have a true understanding of what the saints actually teach and believe, they could never honestly make these accusations. They are like the little barking dogs, all bark no bite. False teachers do not know what they are talking about because they are in over their heads.

An old Persian proverb goes like this:

He who knows not, and knows not that he knows not, is a fool; shun him.

He who knows not, and knows that he knows not, is a child, teach him.

He who knows, and knows not that he knows, is asleep, wake him.

He who knows, and knows that he knows, is wise, follow him.

and we might add: He who knows not, but claims to know is a false prophet, reject him.

- **Receive Wages of Unrighteousness**

The “*wages of sin is death*” (Rom. 6:23a). Justly they will receive the paycheck that is due them. According the law that one reaps what they sow (Gal. 6:7), they will reap “the wages of unrighteousness.” This is not the paycheck they were hoping for when they were lustful and greedy.

These false teachers earned these wages by chasing after pleasure. From the Greek word for “pleasure” comes the English words “hedonism,” “hedonist,” and “hedonistic.” These teachers are in a quest of pleasure; seeking with animal-life self-indulgence. They are so brazen that they will do so even in the daytime. Even the worldly self-respecting Roman would wait to carouse till after the sun went down. Yet the gratification of these teachers cannot wait until for the cover of darkness.

They are seen as “spots” and “blemishes” on society and perhaps the church. Just as an animal was unfit for sacrifice to God because it had spots and blemishes so they are unfit. Yet Christ died that he might cleanse the church of all spots and blemishes (Eph. 5:27).

Some believe that “*feast with you*” is in reference to the Lord’s Supper or the “love feasts.” It is most likely that this merely refers to the times Christians were getting together for a common meal from house to house (Acts 2:46). Although they are carousing in the daytime, they hypocritically associate with the saints at common social meals. The friendly feasting is under the false guise of being a brother and friend. John informs the faithful how to deal with such false teachers. “*If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds*” (2 John 1:10,11).

- **Accursed Children**

Peter is not attempting to place a curse on them. He is using an Hebraism to describe them as children of a curse as opposed to those who are “children of obedience.” They are the product of whatever has dominated their lives; fathered by a curse. Their father is the devil (Jn. 8:44). They are certainly not blessed children of God. This is because of their spiritual condition Peter has previously described.

“*Eyes full of adultery*” actually means “their eyes are full of an adulterous woman” (Anders 128). Just as the saints are looked upon as merchandise for their greed, they look upon all women as adulteress for their out of control licentiousness. Due to their attitude being open about their sin and its gratification, they may believe that this behavior is okay. A older married couple were taking a walk in the park when a young attractive and immodest woman jog past them. The wife notice how much her husband turned around and ogled this “lady.” She rebuked him saying, “What are you looking at? You’re a married man.” He responded, “When I go to a restaurant just because I am on a diet does not mean I cannot look a the desert menu.” However, looking a food does not add calories. Jesus said of this behavior, “*but I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart*” (Matt. 5:28). Eventual these will no longer be able to stop their adulteries whether they be physically acted out or mentally contemplated. In other words they will become a sexual addict.

The actions of these false teachers do not represent a victimless crime. They are intentionally laying a trap using fleshly lusts to catch their victims. Today’s sex appeal is used to sell every kind of merchandise under the sun. These are not the spiritual giants and spiritual mature that are so easily caught, but those who are weak Christians and the novices.

The Greek word from “*trained*” is from *gumnazo* which comes the English word “gymnastic.” Instead of preparing their heart to seek the Lord as did Ezra the priest and scribe, they have been exercising their hearts in their greedy practices. These hucksters are good at this game of fleecing the flock and making merchandise of the members. They have exercised their greed to the point of being experts.

- **Rebuked For Iniquity**

Jeremiah wrote, “*O Lord, I know the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps*” (Jer. 10:23). Since these false prophets have abandoned a road or way upon which they once traveled, Peter is pointing out the fact they are Christians who have gone astray. Instead a following the right way (Matt. 7:13,14) many of these greedy false teachers have followed the way of Balaam whose story can be found in Numbers 22-25. Other New Testament writers have used him as an infamous example (Jude 1:11; Rev. 2:14; 1 Cor. 10:8). Balak, the king of Moab feared the Israelite masses. He hired Balaam to curse Israel. Balaam may have known God and about his people but his love of money made him a prophet-for-hire instead of a man of God (Num. 22:18,40).

Since Balaam would not listen to God. He sent an angel to kill him. The donkey upon which he was riding could see the angel and refused to go forward. After receiving repeated beatings from Balaam God

caused the dumb creature to speak. The oddest thing about this is not God making a voiceless animal speak human language, but the fact that Balaam did not appear to be too alarmed at this abnormal event. Realizing the danger from which the donkey had saved him, Balaam confessed, *"I have sinned"* (Num. 22:24).

Balaam turned back to earn his gold by continuing to defy God. He was out of his mind. His money madness blinded him for the danger of his love of money (1Tim. 6:10). It took a mute animal to bring him back to his senses at least for the moment. All his attempts to curse Israel failed as God put a blessing for Israel in his mouth for them instead. It was madness for Balaam to still think he might succeed in defying the will of God. Rebelling against the way of God is the insanity of a greedy mind. He later taught Israel to sin by going after the idols and the women of Moab. In the end Balaam was killed while Israel was engaged in a battle with the Midianites (Num. 31:3).

In this verse is an apparent contradiction with who was the father of Balaam, was it "Bosor" as Peter wrote or was his father Beor of Pethor according to Moses (Num. 22:5). Apparently, Peter's text had become corrupted by a misspelling by a scribe. Another explanation is that Peter is just using an different spelling of the name Beor.

- **Reserved For Blackness of Darkness**

Just like a well which holds the promise of water for the thirsty traveler, the false teacher cannot provide for the souls who are thirsting after righteousness. Just as a cloud seems to promise much needed water for the farmer's fields a strong wind carries it past and no rain falls, so the false teacher cannot provide water for the planted seed (Word) in the hearts of men to grow. Like a thunder storm with lightening and winds, the clouds announce the coming of rain only to disappoint in the end. Only Jesus can provide the living water to satisfy the thirst of men's souls (John 4:13,14). The best they can do is provide a spiritual mirage.

False teachers cannot keep their promises. The God of Truth must and will keep every one of His promises. He has promised to reserve these liars in hell (Rev. 21:8). Those who love to carouse in the day light will one day spend eternity in the blackness of darkness. These prophets who claim to bring enlightenment to the lost souls, lose their souls in the blackness of darkness.

False Prophets' Tactics

2 Peter 2: 18-19a: 18 For when they speak great swelling words of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error. 19 While they promise them liberty,...

- ▶ **Speaking Vainly**

Dynamic; charismatic; a loud, grandiose oration, using flowery language; having a creative and innovative mind are just a few of the accolades describing false teachers which appeal to young and weak Christians. They mistake these outward qualities as those representing a teacher who has real substance from within. These words are well accepted by the weak but bear not fruit no matter how well they are received.

- ▶ **Alluring Lewdly**

The false teachers make use of their favorite lure: lusts of the flesh to entice weak and new Christians to follow them into their lewd practices. It is much easier to appeal to one's carnal appetite than it is to appeal to a young or weak Christian's spiritual appetite that is either undeveloped or underdeveloped. It is their acts of licentious behavior which they set their bait for their brethren.

- ▶ **Deceiving Novices**

The subject of these false teachers' fishing for souls is not the strong souls, but those who have barely escaped themselves from licentiousness. They prey on the new babes in Christ and the weak Christians. Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons will both quickly leave the home of a Christian with a strong faith based on a through knowledge of God's Word. They are looking for the weak and gullible.

- ▶ **Promising Liberty**

The bait to catch these novices is the promise of freedom. Freedom to do as you please without judgment or consequences. Today, tolerance is the greatest of virtues and judging others behavior is the cardinal sin. Because of their own licentiousness they wish to provide these young souls with a license to sin. Perhaps, they even argued that they will be able to experience more the grace of God. Paul met this argument: *“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?”* (Rom. 6:1,2).

But doing whatever you please without consequences and without restraint is not freedom. P.T. Forsyth wrote, “the purpose of life is not to find your freedom, but to find your master” (Wiersbe 454).

False Prophets’ True Condition

2 Peter 2:19b-22: ...they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage. 20 For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. 21 For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. 22 But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: “A dog returns to his own vomit,” and, “a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire.”

Many scholars and commentators on this chapter hold to the false doctrine of “once saved, always saved” otherwise known in Calvinism as “perseverance of the saints.” They will staunchly and blindingly argue that these false teachers were never Christians. “It must be made clear that these false teachers are unsaved. “They are compared to dogs and pigs, not to sheep” (Wiersbe 447). “They professed to be saved but had never really been redeemed (set free) at all!” (Wiersbe 458). “We must therefore conclude that those who appear to us to ‘fall away’ from the faith, denying the essential truths of Christianity, were never truly saved” (Swindoll 288). He went on to say they “are like counterfeit bills amidst a pocketful of the real thing...they don’t have a true, saving knowledge of Christ that was genuinely transformed their lives...This doesn’t mean that true believers can lose their salvation. In fact, just the opposite! It means that false believers never had salvation to begin with - a fact demonstrated by their failure to remain in the Way of truth” (Swindoll 306). “These people had never reached full, saving faith” (Anders 129). However, just a cursory reading of this chapter will prove they once were faithful saints. In verse nineteen through twenty-two Peter describes their current spiritual condition in light of their past saved condition.

* **Brought Into Bondage**

Sin gives the tempted the illusion of freedom and liberty but in the end brings slavery. This is true for the commercials showing a cool and refreshing beer which does not show the alcoholic years later in prison for driving drunk and killing a family of four. They are not better off in their claims to a liberated life instead their own “freedoms” have defeated or bested them. As the Romans took slaves after a victorious battle, so these teachers have become victims of the very teaching and lifestyle that they used to promote. Jesus said, *“most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin”* (John 8:24). To the Romans Paul wrote, *“Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one’s slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?”* (Rom. 6:16).

It is not the promises of false teachers that bring freedom. Truth can provide true liberty. Jesus said, *“and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free”* (John 8:32).

* **Entangled In Pollutions**

The false prophets have become tangled up in pollutions just as a bird or animal may become caught in an old discarded fishermen’s net or plastic bag that has been cast aside causing pollution.

* **Worse Off Now**

False teachers are worse off than they were before they knew Christ. The “once saved, always saved” crowd are of this sort. They are worse off thinking they are still saved when they are liars (1 John

1:7-10). Another reason for being worse off now is the fact that these false teachers are leading others astray and are held to a greater accountability because of the souls that will be lost because of their lies. Peter reminds us of similar warnings made by Christ (Matt. 12:45; Lk. 11:26).

The Hebrew writer also mentions that backsliding Christians are worse off once they have come to know Christ as their Savior and then rejected the way of life. *“For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, 5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come”* (Heb. 6:4-5). *“Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?”* (Heb. 10:29-27).

* **Better Off Before**

Peter is not arguing that ignorance is bliss. It is not better. Yet these false teachers have rejected freedom in Christ and will not turn back to the truth. A police officer may go easier on someone who was a new driver or a foreigner newly arrived than someone with a long record for breaking traffic laws.

The Greek term for *“known”* used twice in this verse is *epiginosko* which according to Vine means *“to understand completely”* or *“to become thoroughly acquainted with...to know accurately* (Thayer 237). The argument that some false teachers are making about these false teacher never having fully known or understood the faith or way of righteousness is not true. These teachers had been saved and were very well acquainted with the Truth at one point in time.

* **Turned From the Way**

What commandment? Since all of God’s Word is holy and nothing in the context helps us zero in on one specific command it would be wise to take this to be a general reference to all of God’s commandments. There is no such thing as obeying one commandment of our Holy God and not another. A man who argues *“at least I don’t commit adultery”* does not exempt him for loving his wife as his own body.

The very commandments which could set them free they have turned from. Like a man who could be set free from prison by simply obeying the law and paying his fine, but he refuses to do so.

* **Returned to the Filth**

Both of these sayings are called by the singular *“proverb.”* The first is found in Proverbs 26:11: *“As a dog returns to his own vomit, so a fool repeats his folly.”* The other one is most likely from a secular, ancient source. Both parables teach the same point: once cleansed of poison from the stomach or filth from their hide both the dog and the hog will return to it again. Peter loves to compare these false teachers to animal behavior. Both dogs and hogs were unclean and filthy animals in the minds of first century believers and referred to negatively many times in the Bible (Lev. 11:7; 1 Kings 14:11; 21:19; Is. 56:11; Matt. 7:6; Lk. 15:15,16; Phil. 3:2; Rev. 22:15).

Questions:

1. In what way are the false teachers like animals?
2. What are the false prophets doing in the daytime?
3. Why are they called accursed children?

4. In what manner have they trained their hearts?
5. Who was Balaam?
6. Why are false teachers compared to waterless wells and rainless clouds?
7. Where does God have reservations for these false prophets?
8. What are the four tactics of false teachers mentioned here by Peter?
9. Many commentators believe in "once saved, always saved" so they argue that these false teachers were never really Christians in the first place. List the phrase in this chapter which show that these false teachers were indeed saved at one point in time.
10. To what have the false teachers been brought unto bondage?
11. How were these false teachers worse off now and better off before?
12. What is Peter's point about false teachers in these two proverbs?

Alert Minds Defending the Second Coming

Unlike the apathetic interest of today's Christians about the Coming of the Lord, the early Christians were so certain of the return of Christ that they expected it in their lifetime. After the original generation of saints began to die and Christ had not yet come, they became concerned and their faith weakened. This made them vulnerable targets for the greedy, licentious false teachers Peter had previously described. Peter will defend the future coming of the Day of the Lord by alerting them of the dangerous scoffers of the present and by reminding them of the past.

Alert Minds

2 Peter 3:1-3a: 1 Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), 2 that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior, 3 knowing this first:

■ **Alert Minds are Beloved**

Peter refers to the recipients of his letter with the term of endearment: "*Beloved.*" According to Arndt and Gingrich it means "dear friends" (6). Peter uses this several times in this chapter (3:1,8,14,15,17) showing his loving relationship and interest in them.

■ **Alert Minds Need Awakening**

The phrase "*stir up*" means to awake or arouse the mind. In order for the mind to work it must be alert. Peter realizing the danger of the false teaching against Christ's Return is sounding the alarm to alert slumbering saints. Christianity is a thinking man's religion. The God who designed the mind demands the intelligent use of it.

■ **Alert Minds Need Reminders**

Peter, as all good teachers, knew the value of repetition. Much of the Bible deals with repeating old truths instead of introducing new material. The book of Deuteronomy for example is not a second listing of commandments for the Israelites but the reminder of the Law to a new generation about to enter the promise land without Moses, the Lawgiver. They need to remember the inspired words they have been taught about the Second Coming.

This is the second letter he is writing. Most likely, Peter is referring back to his first epistle.

■ **Alert Minds are Pure**

Just as the wheat must be sifted to remove the worthless chaff, the mind must be sifted to remove the many false concepts surrounding the Second Coming. "Plato had used this phrase to refer to pure reason uncontaminated by the senses. The Greek word *eilikrines* literally means 'sun-judged.' A piece of pottery was 'sun-judged' when it was held up to the sunlight in order to see any flaws or cracks" (Baron 206).

■ **Alert Minds Need The Scriptures**

One of the things they needed to be alert to was the Bible teaching about the coming "Day of the Lord." This was foretold many several of the "holy prophets" of the Old Testament. "*For behold, the Lord will come with fire and with His chariots, like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by His sword the Lord will judge all flesh; and the slain of the Lord shall be many*" (Is. 66:15-16). "*For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, and all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble. And the day which is coming shall burn them up,*' Says the Lord of hosts,

'That will leave them neither root nor branch. But to you who fear My name the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings; and you shall go out and grow fat like stall-fed calves. You shall trample the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day that I do this,' Says the Lord of hosts" (Mal. 4:1-3). The Lord also predicted His return at the end of time (Matt. 24:35-25:46). His apostles taught the early Christians to anticipate the Second Coming (1 Th. 4:13ff). So the Law and Prophets of the Old Testament, words of Christ, and teachings of the apostles of the New Testament are all united as the revealed words of God.

■ **Alert Minds Need Priorities**

When someone needs to be awake from sleep the first thing they want to know is why they had to be awoken. Peter gives them a definite reason for being stirred up by way of this reminder. False teachers are claiming that the doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ is not true. This must be done before anything else because the hope found in the Second Coming is vital to their comfort and vigilant prayer life.

Defense of the Second Coming

1 Peter 3:3b-10: ...that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, 4 and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation." 5 For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, 6 by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. 7 But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. 8 But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.

★ **Determined Denial of the Second Coming**

One of the common tactics of false teachers to ridicule the beliefs of and efforts of Christians in order to intimidate them and weakening their faith. When Nehemiah was leading the Jews in the effort to reconstruct the walls of Jerusalem they were men with the taunts of scoffers. *"But it so happened, when Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, that he was furious and very indignant, and mocked the Jews. And he spoke before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, 'What are these feeble Jews doing? Will they fortify themselves? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they complete it in a day? Will they revive the stones from the heaps of rubbish—stones that are burned?'" Now Tobiah the Ammonite was beside him, and he said, 'Whatever they build, if even a fox goes up on it, he will break down their stone wall'" (Neh. 4:1-3).*

The time the saints can expect these scoffers in during the *"last days."* According to Peter on the Day of Pentecost during his first Gospel sermon he claimed that these are the *"last days"* (Acts 2:5ff). Christianity and the beginning of the Kingdom (church) represent the final age of man in relation to God's scheme of redemption.

The real reason they reject the return of the Lord revolves around their desire to feed the lusts of their flesh. If Christ is not coming there will be not Judgment of man's life and not sentence executed against his soul. If there are no consequences, then they can freely live any way they want to live. Paul gives the bitter news for these scoffers, *"each one of us will give an account of himself to God"* (Rom. 14:12). *"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad"* (2 Cor. 5:10).

These scoffers give two arguments for their rejection of the Second Coming. First, the *"fathers"* have died before the return of Christ. They are referring to those saints who first obeyed the Gospel and that original generation has died. Sleep is a very common metaphor for death in the Bible. Since too much

time had past and many saints will not be able to witness Christ's return, these mockers act as if it is proof that He will never return. Paul assured the saints of the first century that this did not pose a problem. *"But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.... And the dead in Christ will rise"* (1 Th. 4:13,14,16). Second, so much time had past and nothing has ever changed since time began. They appear to hold to a form of uniformitarianism. This doctrine of men asserts that all things from the beginning are governed by natural laws. The idea of divine intervention in the world is denied.

Peter accuses these scoffers of self-imposed blindness. They knowingly are ignorant of the historical facts that will clearly debunk their argument, especially the second one. It has been said that no man is as blind as the man who refuses to see. They forget about these facts on purpose. Sometimes the only way to deal with solid, irrefutable evidence is to simply ignore it. This may not be honest, but it is effect for the false teacher.

★ **Divine Development of the World**

The universe did not begin with a tiny compacted dot of matter which suddenly exploded. The earth did not come from the sun and moon for the earth. Lizards did not come from birds. The origin and creative power of creation is the words that came from the Creator. *"By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible"* (Heb. 11:3). Several times in Genesis chapter one creation was the result of "God said..." *"God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light.... Then God said, 'Let the earth bring forth grass,... Then God said, 'Let the waters abound with an abundance of living creatures, ... Then God said, 'Let the earth bring forth the living creature...'"* (Gen. 1:3,11,20,24). The Psalmist wrote, *"for He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast"* (Ps. 33:9).

The earth was fashioned between two realms of water. *"Then God said, 'Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.' Thus God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament; and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. So the evening and the morning were the second day. Then God said, 'Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear'; and it was so"* (Gen. 1:6-9).

★ **Divine Destruction of the Ancient World**

The world that God created with His spoken word was destroyed by the same words that commanded there to be light. Things did not continue as it had always from the time of creation. The waters of the deep rose. It began to rain for the first time, and the earth was complete covered, it would never be the same again. *"All in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, all that was on the dry land, died"* (Gen. 7:22). The strength of this argument against the scoffers is that if God destroyed the world once to punish the wicked and rescue the righteous, He can do it again.

★ **Divine Sustaining of the World**

Just as the world was not self-creating, it is not self-sustaining without the power of God's word. Paul made this claim in regard to Christ, *"all things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist"* (Col. 3:16b,17).

★ **Divine Reserving of the World**

God made a promise to mankind through Noah that He would never destroy the world again with a worldwide flood (Gen. 9:11f). Next, God is going to destroy the world with fire. God has put the world on reserve or lay away. The day of reckoning for the ungodly will come just as it did during the days of Noah. The same word of God that can create from water, destroy with water, can destroy all with fire. Not this is something that God will do to the whole universal on His time table at His word. Man may have harnessed the power of the atom, but when the end comes it will be God who pushes the button not some politician or general.

★ **Divine Relation to Time**

In Peter's next argument for God's right to delay the Second Coming he paraphrases Psalm 90:4. Over the years this has been a passage which has been greatly distorted in meaning and application.

Some argue for Theistic Evolution by claiming that the day in Genesis one is not necessary a twenty-four hour period. After all with God they say, "a day is as a..." Now they have millions and millions of years where Moses had six days each with a "evening and a morning." The point Peter is trying to make is not that God does not have the ability to tell time, but time has nothing to do with God or His abilities. He operates, plans, and exists entirely apart from and above the laws of time.

This fact represents the one thing they cannot forget. Whereas man is a time bound creature, the Creator made time and is not subject to it. He is eternal. God has no beginning and no end. He is the "high and Lofty One who in habits eternity" (Is. 57:15). What is God waiting for? God has His own timetable. When He first sent His Son in the flesh He did so "when the fulness of time came..." (Gal. 4:4).

Thirty-five to forty years had past since Christ ascended into Heaven. To many readers of Peter's letters His return was past due. Now Christians are looking back nearly two thousand years and still He has not come. Whereas mankind counts time God is not compelled to feel the pressure which comes with the passing of time. He will send Christ back at the perfect time He chooses. He will not and never has worked according to man's timetable.

Every generation of Christians from the very first in the first century has claimed to know when Jesus was going to return. Yet God has chosen not to reveal to man the day or hour of this final event. Jesus said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away. But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only" (Matt. 24:35,36).

★ **Divine Motive for Delay**

God not only does not react to the passing of time like man, but He is not "slack" with regard to carrying out His promises. He will not delay forever. He will not loiter around in heaven without keeping His promises. God is never slow or tardy. He Lord has never been too early, or too late. He is always right on time.

God waits because God is love and sent His Son the first time because He so love the world. Now He still loves man and will send Christ back at the right time. God's perfect justice is balanced with his perfect love. He is willing to save every single valuable soul which is worth more than all the world (Matt. 16:24). This will to save is not teaching universal salvation. God might want to see all repent, but God will not remove man's free-will to chose to come to repentance.

Repentance is God's objective. He is motivated to wait to give all men a chance. John the Baptist came preaching, "repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 3:2). Now we must preach to the lost "repent for the Day of the Lord is imminent". Repentance requires more than just sorrow for sin, but a change of heart which rejects sin and turns toward God.

Delaying punishment of the wicked to show mercy and opportunity to the lost has been a trade mark of God's relationship with the world of ungodly men. His longsuffering waited 120 years in the days of Noah to save only eight souls (1 Peter 3:20). When it was time to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah He paused to consider the intercessory prayers of Abraham and did not destroy Sodom till Lot and his daughters were safely removed and in the city of Zoar. Both the Assyrian captivity of Israel and the Babylonian captivity of Judah demonstrate God's same delay in punishment in order to show mercy and give opportunity. God said, "'Do I have any pleasure at all that the wicked should die?' says the Lord God, 'and not that he should turn from his ways and live?'" (Ezek. 18:23). Of God's motives Paul wrote that He "desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4).

★ **Divine Day Definitely Coming**

Peter's final argument leveled at the scoffers is that the coming of the Day of the Lord is a fact.

The "Day of the Lord" is a major theme throughout the Bible especially in the prophetic books of the Old Testament. Isaiah uses it in reference to judgment on Babylon (Is. 13:5-13). Amos speaks of the Day of the Lord coming in Judgment upon Israel (Amos 5:18-24). This Day tends to involve both a sentence of condemnation against the wicked and a promise of rescue for the righteous.

The timing of the Lord's coming is described as "a thief in the night." Jesus used this same illustration to warning of the suddenness of His return. "But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect" (Matt.

24:43,44). Paul also used this concerning the Second Coming “for you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night” (1 Th. 5:2). Not only does this illustrate the suddenness of his coming but also the fact that no one will be able to determine exactly when He will come. No thief is going to call up their intended victim and make an appointment and give them the exact time of their arrival. “Hello, is this the Gullible residence? You don’t know me but I intend to be at your home between noon and four to rob your place. So if you are available you can just go ahead and meet me there to let me in so I do not have to break down your back door.”

Three things are said to happen when the Day of the Lord comes. First, the universe “will pass away with a great noise.” Literally it means a crackling sound. “When the atomic bomb was tested in the Nevada desert, more than one reporter said that the explosion gave forth ‘a whirring sound,’ or a ‘crackling sound.’” (Wiersbe 466). Second, “the elements will melt with fervent heat.” These elements represent the substance which makes up everything in the universe, perhaps the atoms. Third, the earth and everything in it created by God or made by man will be burned up.

Before creation their was nothing. After the Day of the Lord there will be nothing.

Questions:

1. Matching:

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| ___ stir up | a. early Christians died |
| ___ beloved | b. A day of coming Divine punishment and reward |
| ___ Deuteronomy | c. final age of man in relation to God’s scheme of redemption |
| ___ Day of the Lord | d. dear friends |
| ___ pure mind | e. a second giving of the Law of Moses |
| ___ scoffer | f. to awaken, to arouse one’s thoughts |
| ___ last days | g. sun-judged, genuine or uncontaminated thoughts |
| ___ fathers fell asleep | h. one who makes fun of or ridicules others |
| ___ uniformitarianism | i. creative power and sustaining force of Creation |
| ___ God said... | j. future means of world’s destruction |
| ___ fire | k. delaying, loitering, slow or tardy |
| ___ slack | l. belief that all things on earth continue by natural laws without divine intervention |

2. What is the real motive for the scoffers' rejection of the Second Coming?

3. What are the two reasons the scoffers give for their rejection of the Second Coming?
4. What does Peter use of the flood prove to the scoffers about the coming end of the world?
5. What is meant here by the statement "*with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day*"?
6. How will the Second Coming of Christ be like a "*thief in the night*"?
7. What three things are said to happen when the Day of the Lord comes?

Living In the Present In View of the Future

The Second Coming holds an attraction to many people. However, it is not a curiosity to be indulged but a monumental event that requires preparation

1 Peter 3:11-18: 11 Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, 12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? 13 Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. 14 Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless; 15 and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation—as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, 16 as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures. 17 You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; 18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.

Mark Twain once said, "most people are bothered by those passages which they cannot understand; but as for me, I always notice that the passages in Scripture which trouble me most are those which I do understand." The passage of scripture that should be easy to understand and easy to take are those dealing with the promises of Christ's Return. No Christian should be troubled by this fact. However, the fact of his return should make and impact on our lives. It should motive us into action.

Peter began his second epistle showing God's great generosity in providing all things for our faith through the knowledge of Christ. Because of what God has done the saint must do his part in perfectly supplying his faith. In order to secure his salvation in Christ he must not only supply these things but also remember these things and all that has been supplied to him from eyewitness accounts and the prophecies found in the Holy Spirit inspired Scripture. His faith must be protected from false teachers, that is, from their greed, licentious lifestyle, and lies. In particular their scoffing at the idea that Christ will return. Since this will become a reality one day, the saints need to change their outlook on this life.

If Christ is not going to come back and judge the world and reward the saints, why bother with your faith? One might as well be like the false teachers who have turned away from the way of righteousness and be greedy for material things and fulfill the desires of the flesh openly.

On the other hand, if the in which we live world is going to be burned up, then why bother stock piling material goods in a place that can be dissolved at any moment. This "Day of God" is the "Day of the Lord" previously mentioned. Peter says it will certainly come. The "day of the Lord" is called by Paul "the coming of the Lord" (1 Th. 4:13-5:4).

Because the Lord is Coming Back Any Moment Christians Ought to...

► **Be Citizens with Holy Conduct and Godliness**

A "holy conduct" refers to that which regulation of my performance and "godliness" refers to righteous attitudes toward God and others. Both of these terms are plural. Thus they are to encompass all one's life. These stand in stark contrast to the attitudes of the false teachers and their shameless behavior.

▶ **Be Expecting the Second Coming**

The term for "*looking*" is to look with the sense of expectation. The term "*hastening*" adds the idea of eager desire. Thus we have desire plus expectation which is a perfect definition for the hope of the Christian. Perhaps, we could call it the look of hope. We look for a city whose builder and maker is God, a city not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

The early Christians were known to use the term "Maranatha" meaning "O Lord Come!" (1 Cor. 16:22). This expresses a heart felt desire to see the Lord return. It is not like many of those who are in love with this world and the things they have accumulated in it. We want to see the person who promised to return: Christ.

A little girl heard her mother and another lady talking about the return of the Lord. Later in the day the mother went upstairs to the girl's room and found her standing by the window. The little one said, "Mother, I heard you say that Jesus was coming back. I am looking for Him for I want to be first to see Him. So I took a bath and put on my clean clothes so I am ready."

However, Peter reminds them that when He does return it will not be just about reward. The universe as we know it will cease to exist. Everything God created and everything man has made will be come nothing.

▶ **Be Anticipating Heaven**

The old world will be gone for good and the saints should expectantly desire the "*new heavens and the new earth.*" A spiritual realm not filled with corruptions of the old. Old black plaque reads, "Only one life, 'twill soon be past. Only what's done for Christ will last." Christians should focus their desire on those treasures which will last which came be laid up in heaven (Mt. 6:19,20). These are the only one designed to survive the fires of the Second Coming.

Some believe that God will remake the earth and the heavens. It will still be like the physical world we live in now just given a complete make-over so that it is like the creation was intended to before sin corrupted it. The word "*new*" is translated from the word *kainos*, it means new in quality. It is not in reference to chronology of time. It is not just the new order of things. But a better quality of a different thing. It is an absolutely new creation (Is. 55:17). In Revelation John said he, "*saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away... And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away. Then He who sat on the throne said, 'Behold, I make all things new.'*" (Rev. 21:1,4,5a). It is a place where "*righteousness dwells.*" Only the faithful will live in the new heavens and new earth. John went on to say, "*but the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death*" (Rev. 21:8).

▶ **Be Diligent in Peace**

Again he uses a term of endearment to express his close concern for their future. They need to put forth diligent or strenuous effort. It takes a great deal of effort to be at peace in God because "*friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God*" (James 4:4).

The kind of peace which God offers is the one which will allow a Christian to know that at any moment this could all be over and he would still be free of anxiety and apprehension. The Second Coming is when all his hopes will be realized. A common epitaph on the graves of the ancient Greeks was "no hope." After Christ came and promised to return the epitaph "in peace" was often inscribed on the graves of the sleeping saints.

To please Him we need to be found by God "*without spot and blameless.*" This is in contrast to the false teachers which Peter called "*stains and blemishes.*" One must practice pure religion to keep himself spotless and without blame in this world (Js. 1:27). Giving every effort to keep a clean character in a corrupt and filthy world. Christians must also put forth every effort to be blameless. This is not a requirement to be sinless. All Christians sin (1 Jn. 1:8-10). Yet a blameless Christian is like Teflon. No accusations of sin will stick to him because as soon as it is discovered he repents and confesses his sins. He has no hidden skeletons in his closet.

▶ **Be Mindful That God's Longsuffering Equals Salvation**

God waited in the days of Noah to save just eight souls while one hundred and twenty years had past. The term "*longsuffering*" is from the Greek *makrothumia*. "This word comes for two Greek words: *makros*, meaning 'large,' and *thymos*, maning 'intense anger, burning wrath, explosive rage.' Together these words refer to he act of holding back one's intense anger" (Swindoll 310). Christ has not returned, but He is by no means a lazy, slacker. He is continuing to hold back his wrathful, vengeful sentence of Judgment upon the wicked in order to bring others the opportunity of salvation.

Every day God delays Christ's return is another "*day of salvation*" as Paul said (2 Cor. 6:1,2). Another day for souls to obey the Gospel. Another day for erring Christian to come to repentance.

▶ **Be Aware of False Teachers**

Difficult passages to understand can be found throughout the Bible. False teachers love to manipulate these in support of their pet doctrines. The writings of Paul offer a playground for them. The phrase "*hard to understand*" was used in Peter's day of the rambling, meaningless oration of pagan priests. Many have distorted Paul's teachings in his letter to the Romans to teach Calvinism, especially the idea of salvation by "faith only."

In his text, Peter points out that he regarded Paul's writings to be on an equal plane with all the other inspired Scriptures.

Peter claims that it doesn't take much learning or a sound mind to twist someone's words to mean something you want them to. However, the end result is always the same: spiritual ruin. The misinterpretation of scripture can lead to destruction. Four times Peter uses the word "*destruction*," and all four times it refer to false teacher and those who follow them. To stand firm on the true and accurate interrelations of God's Word will keep one from falling for false teaching. To recognize error when compared to trust will keep one from following false teachers. "To be forewarned to be forearmed."

▶ **Be Growing in Grace and Knowledge**

The opposite of falling for false teaching and following false teachers is growth "in the grace and knowledge" of Christ. A tree which does not grow and so loses its stability in the earth is blown over by a strong wind. A tree which keeps its roots planted will continue to standfast. A Christian who does not continue to grow will fall over when faced with the windy words of false teaching. A Christina who grows in both the knowledge of Christ and God's grace will remain steadfast. This requires one to meditate on God's Law day and night. A faithful Christian is one who never stopped growing. At the age of ninety-five Pablo Casals was asked by a reporter: "Mr. Casals, you are ninety-five and the greatest cellist that ever lived. Why do you still practice six hours a day?" He answered, "Because I think I'm making progress."

▶ **Be Glorifying Christ**

Peter aptly concludes his second epistle with a doxology: "*to Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.*" Glory be to God for giving us everything we need for the development or our faith especially the Holy Spirit inspired Scriptures. Thanks be to God for rescuing us for the trials and punishment of the false teachers. Praise God for his longsuffering and for His promise of sending his Son back at the right time.

Questions:

1. What is the "*Day of God*"?
2. Define "*holy conduct*" and "*godliness*."

3. What does "*maranatha*" mean? Why is it appropriate attitude for Christians of today?
4. Is the promise of the "*new heavens and a new earth*" the idea of just giving the old ones a make over? Explain.
5. What is the main thing that will make this "*new heavens and a new earth*" different from the old?
6. What does it take to be found in peace by or with God?
7. How does a Saint remain "*spotless and without blemish*"?
8. Divine "*longsuffering*"? What does it accomplish in regard to the delay of Christ's Return?
9. Peter said the same of Paul's writings were "*hard to understand.*" What are some of Paul's teachings or passages that you find had to understand?
10. Why is growth in the grace and knowledge of Christ so important.
11. List why we could glorify God today?