



Fighting the Good Fight

Study Guide: 2 Peter

2 Peter

Study Guide

Fighting the Good Fight
4 Studies
For Individuals or Groups

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[CrossSites Bible Study](#)

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{Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture verses are taken from the English Standard Version}

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Lesson One: Foundations of Faith

Bible Passage: [2 Peter 1:1–11](#)

Big Idea: *Spiritual maturity is a process that requires intentional effort and is grounded in the knowledge of Christ, leading to fruitful living and assurance of salvation.*

Introduction

The early believers were under constant pressure from two fronts. On the one front they were facing persecution from the culture. They were ridiculed and ostracized because of their faith and radically different lifestyles. They refused to take part in the pagan and immoral practices of the culture. The government was also hostile toward this new faith. In fact, when Rome burned, Nero spread rumors that it was the Christians that had caused the fire. Many believers lost their lives in Rome as sport for the pagan culture. The second front of opposition came from within the church. False teachers had begun to infiltrate the church. These teachers denied Jesus' humanity, deity and second coming. They did so in order to advocate for freedom to satisfy sensual appetites and pleasure. They saw no reason not to partake in the pleasures of the culture. Peter and Jude both wrote letters to counter these false teachers. They wanted believers to remain firm and fixed in their faith in Jesus Christ.

There has been much debate about who wrote 2 Peter. Conservative interpreters affirm that the Apostle Peter wrote 2 Peter. The writer opens the letter by identifying himself as the Apostle Peter.

The Letter was most likely written shortly after his first letter (1 Peter). It was written sometime between A.D. 60 -68. Most likely written while he was in Rome.

The letter was probably written to the same group of believers that he wrote to in his first letter ([1 Peter 1:1-2](#)). Peter is writing to warn the believers of the false teachers that were infiltrating the church. These teachers were early Gnostics. They denied both the humanity and deity of Jesus Christ. They rejected the Second Coming. Gnostics taught that salvation came through secret knowledge they could dispense. Peter and Jude both wrote against these teachers and their false teachings.

Peter wrote his second letter to warn believers of these false teachers. He wanted believers to know that they are called to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ. They are to stand firm against false teachings and fulfill their calling as followers of Jesus.

This letter is relevant to modern day believers. We live in a culture that is attacking the true teachings of the Word of God. Never has there been a more pressing time for true believers to take a stand and fight the good fight against those who would seek to infiltrate the church with false teachings.

Opening Thoughts

Living in Florida I have seen the effects of hurricanes on homes. Some of those built close to the ocean shore are destroyed while those built inland on more solid soil are able to withstand the storm.

Jesus told the parable of two foundations ([Matt 7:24-27](#)). He showed us that what we build our lives on matters. If we genuinely want to have a healthy relationship with Himself and the Father you had to have a firm foundation. This means diligent and regular time studying God's Word.

Peter opens his second letter reminding the readers that if they are going to withstand the persecution and false teaching that they are enduring from the culture they must have a firm foundation. That is going to require intentional effort and is grounded in the knowledge of Christ. This intentionality would lead them to fruitful living and assurance of salvation.

Foundation in Divine Power

[2 Peter 1:1-4](#)

¹ Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ: ² May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. ³ His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, ⁴ by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

Peter opens his second letter by identifying himself as the author, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ. He did so to establish his authority to address the false *teachers*. His declaration of being a servant (*doulos*) goes deeper than just a mere slave. In using *doulos* he is telling the readers that I am more than a slave, but I am a bond-servant bound by law to my master. Bondservants chose to stay and be bound to their master. Peter is declaring, by my choice I am a slave/servant of Jesus Christ.

Peters desire is that through the knowledge of God and of Jesus, we might have grace and peace. The grace that we receive from God is unearned and came as the result of Christ's death on the cross. The divine power granted us was given through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Apart from a personal relationship with Jesus we are powerless to defend truth or defeat sin. The only way we can have a personal relationship with Jesus is by faith...that faith comes through the knowledge of scripture and the person of Jesus.

The accurate and complete knowledge of God and Jesus is not some secret or mystical knowledge. It is available to all mankind. Peter is writing against those who would teach falsely that the knowledge of God and Jesus is some secret or mystical knowledge that only a few can understand. Full knowledge of God/Jesus provides everything we need to build a foundation of faith. As we grow in our faith we become more like Jesus/God. Active obedience comes as we gain knowledge of God and of His will for our lives. Jesus tells what life is and then provides the knowledge need to live that life. As believers we are called to have a foundation built on Christ. We are called to live here on earth as Christ lived.

Cultivating Christ-like Character

[2 Peter 1:5–7](#)

*⁵ For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge,
⁶ and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness,
⁷ and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.*

Building a foundation is just the beginning, whether for a house or for faith. Peter encourages believers to live out their faith beyond mere profession. He outlines steps for living victoriously in Christ, starting with virtue and moral excellence. In a culture that often lacks absolute truth, it's crucial to understand God's teachings on morality.

Peter emphasizes gaining knowledge of God's Word and practicing self-control, which leads to perseverance. This steadfastness helps us endure tough times, knowing God is in control. Walking in the Spirit ensures we're not alone. Cultivating these values demonstrates to the world what it means to be a child of God, exemplifying brotherly affection and love. Prioritizing the needs of fellow believers over our desires is vital, especially under cultural pressure. Supporting each other strengthens us during trials, leading to victory through Jesus Christ.

While we may profess Christianity through accepting Christ's salvation, it must be evident in our daily lives. Our faith needs to go beyond head knowledge, requiring active effort to embody our spiritual transformation ([Phil 2:12-13](#); [James 2:14-26](#)).

Resulting in Fruitful Assurance

[2 Peter 1:8–11](#)

⁸ For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. ¹⁰ Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. ¹¹ For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Peter observes that embracing these qualities and nurturing their development in one's life will produce positive outcomes. Conversely, if an individual neglects to cultivate these attributes, they may become ineffective and unproductive. The understanding of the Word of God might remain purely intellectual without impacting their daily actions..

James states that believers should not only listen to God's word but also act upon it ([James 2:22](#)). Biblical knowledge should extend beyond intellectual understanding, enhancing comprehension of salvation. Studying the Bible will lead to a deeper understanding of the nature of salvation.

Without these qualities, we risk losing sight of what grants us salvation and forgetting the bigger picture of redemption. Practicing them helps us defeat sin, endure trials, and serve others. Peter urges readers to be

certain of their salvation and combat false teachings. Knowing the truth enables one to identify falsehoods.

As these qualities become a part of our lives we will begin to see changes and transformations in our lives. These changes will reassure us of our calling before God. The opposite is also true. If we are not seeing these changes in our lives and you are not concerned then you should wonder and question whether you are a true believer in Jesus Christ.

We must consider whether we merely listen to God's Word or allow it to influence our daily lives. The Christian life is not static; rather, it is one of continuous growth and striving to emulate Christ each day. By earnestly seeking to know Jesus thus enhancing our faith, we ensure that our Christian journey remains fruitful and dynamic.

Application

Recognize that spiritual maturity doesn't happen by chance. If you find yourself feeling stagnant in your faith, set aside specific time each day for personal study of the Word and prayer. Start small—perhaps 15 minutes daily—using a discipleship resource or Bible study guide. Focus on understanding the character of Christ and His teachings. This intentional effort not only deepens your knowledge but also cultivates the fruit of the Spirit in your life, leading to transformative changes that reflect Christ's love in your interactions.

Discussion Questions

1. Peter speaks about the power of Christ in [2 Peter 1:1–11](#). Why is this an important starting point? What does Christ's power do for believers?
2. How does Peter's encouragement to pursue goodness and knowledge reflect the nature of Christian discipleship?
3. If salvation is assured to the true believer, then why do so many Christians lack assurance? How does an unfruitful life aggravate these feelings of doubt?
4. Can you summarize the steps Peter outlines for growing in faith? How do they build on one another?
5. What are some specific steps you can take this week to nurture virtues like self-control and perseverance as mentioned in Peter's letter?

Lesson Two: Focus on Scripture

Bible Passage: [2 Peter 1:12-21](#)

Big Idea: *Being grounded in the truth of Scripture helps believers live faithfully and confidently amid a world filled with confusion and lies.*

Opening Thoughts

In [Matthew 4](#), Matthew records the temptations of Christ after His baptism. Jesus response the same way to each of the temptations, “*For it is written.*” Jesus had a deep understanding of scripture and was able to use it to withstand Satan’s temptations.

Paul in his letter to Timothy wrote: “*Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.*” [2 Timothy 2:15](#). In Ephesians Paul described the word of God as the sword of the Spirit ([Eph 6:17](#)).

Peter's letter emphasizes the necessity of adhering to scriptural teachings as we strive to live morally upright lives in a challenging cultural environment. He encourages us to remain vigilant and committed to our faith. Understanding the significance of prophetic revelation and the authoritative role of Scripture in directing our daily conduct is crucial.

Persevere in Truthful Remembrance

[2 Peter 1:12-15](#)

¹² Therefore I intend always to remind you of these qualities, though you know them and are established in the truth that you have. ¹³ I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to stir you up by way of reminder, ¹⁴ since I know that the putting off of my body will be soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me. ¹⁵ And I will make every effort so that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things.

Peter indicates that he will continue to remind the believers of the qualities that are foundational to their faith as long as he is alive. He recognizes that his time for teaching and guiding them is limited and expresses a desire for them to be able to recall the teachings he has provided.

While salvation frees us from sin, it is essential to remember our origins and the sacrifice made by Christ for our freedom. The Christian journey is one of continuous growth. From the moment of salvation until we encounter Jesus in heaven, we are called to develop in faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, steadfastness, godliness, and love. To cultivate godliness, we must reflect upon and integrate the spiritual truths found within the Scriptures.

We have access to God's written Word in both the Old Testament and the New Testament, which were recorded by men inspired by God. This was done so that we could learn and be continually reminded of God's truth. The Word of God is a precious treasure of divine revelation, initially given to ancient Israel and extended to everyone through what God did in His Son Jesus Christ.

A significant aspect of our spiritual growth is the daily study of God's Word. We are to allow God's Word to guide us into obedient and transformed lives. As the Word of God takes root in our lives, it will testify to the

changes brought about by the power of the gospel. Regular study, reflection, and obedience to God's Word will reveal our spiritual responsibilities. Being able to recall the truths found in scripture will aid in preventing us from being swayed by false teachings or doubts. Instead, it will foster a steadfast, Christ-centered conviction in our daily walk.

Pursue Verified Witness

[2 Peter 1:16–18](#)

¹⁶ For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. ¹⁷ For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased,” ¹⁸ we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain.

During my research into potential Bible colleges, I placed emphasis on understanding each institution's stance regarding the authority of scripture. At that time, my denomination was engaged in an internal debate over the doctrine of biblical inerrancy. Over the years, some faculty members in the denomination's colleges and seminaries advocated views suggesting the Bible contained inaccuracies and mythological elements. Ultimately, advocates for biblical inerrancy succeeded in restoring leadership that believed and taught biblical inerrancy within these academic institutions.

This challenge is not unique to recent times; similar issues existed during the apostle Peter's era. Some individuals promoted alternative interpretations about Jesus and His return, which Peter referred to as “cleverly devised myths.” It is important to recognize that, unlike today, early believers did not have access to a completed New Testament and depended on the teachings of the Apostles. Peter and the other apostles affirmed that the Old Testament Prophets wrote God's messages the same way that they were proclaiming God's truth by preaching the gospel.

Peter was completely convinced of the truth that he taught because of his personal experience being one of Christ's disciples. He had been an eyewitness to the ministry of Jesus. Peter had been witness of the glory along with James and John at the Transfiguration, where Jesus revealed his divine identity ([Matt 17:1-8](#); [Mark 9:2-8](#); [Luke 9:28-36](#)). The Transfiguration was a preview for Peter and those with him of Jesus' final glory and power, which would be inaugurated with the Second Coming.

Peter emphasizes that Christian faith is based on historical accounts rather than myths or fiction. Unlike many world religions, which often lack verifiable historical origins, Christianity is closely tied to the testimony of eyewitnesses who possessed thorough knowledge of Jesus's life and ministry (cf. [John 15:26–27](#); [Acts 1:21–22](#); [2:42](#)). Peter and the other apostles did not invent narratives about Jesus. Because they were direct witnesses to his life and teachings. Their firsthand testimony serves to strengthen and encourage us as believers in our journey as disciples of Christ. Furthermore, Peter's reference to the glory and majesty of Jesus aims to inspire believers toward virtuous living and perseverance amidst challenges, until the anticipated moment of seeing Him face-to-face ([Titus 2:11–14](#); [1 John 3:1–3](#)).

Prioritize God's Prophetic Word

[2 Peter 1:19–21](#)

¹⁹ And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, ²⁰ knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. ²¹ For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Peter affirmed his unwavering trust in the Old Testament Scriptures. He previously recounted his extraordinary encounter witnessing Jesus Christ's glory during the transfiguration on the mountain, an event that served as a glimpse of the anticipated return of Christ. However, Peter emphasizes that *“the prophetic word more fully confirmed”* and suggests to his audience that their assurance concerning Christ need not be based solely on personal experiences. Rather, he underscores that Scripture offers a source of confirmation that surpasses individual testimony in reliability.

A comprehensive study of both the Old Testament and the New Testament—including the prophecies regarding Christ and their subsequent fulfillment—is essential. All scripture serves as a guide through the complexities of life and this corrupt culture in which we live. In order to stand against the errors of false teachers, we must seek to understand, accept, and obey the entirety of Scripture. Understanding that all of scripture is from God and was written by men as they were led by the Holy Spirit.

Application

It can be challenging to hold onto your faith when there is so much misinformation in books and online. It's important not to accept every teaching without question. Take inspiration from the Bereans in the New Testament ([Acts 17](#)), who examined the scriptures to confirm that Paul's message was true. This level of discernment requires dedicating time each day to study and reflect on the Word of God. Seek guidance from the Holy Spirit for understanding, and write down valuable insights you gain. Sharing these with friends can strengthen your dedication to the truth of God's Word and encourage others as you all grow in knowledge together.

Discussion Questions

1. Why is it important to know about the origin of the Bible?
2. How important to your faith is it that Peter (and other New Testament writers) were eyewitnesses of the life of Christ?
3. How can we be confident that the Bible is the Word of God?
4. How does a Christian leader avoid carelessly using Scripture that results in one's "own interpretation" or faulty interpretation? What steps can be made to avoid this at all cost?
5. What implications does divine inspiration carry, specifically in how we read and apply the Bible?

Lesson Three: Falsehoods and Deceptions

Bible Passage: [2 Peter 2:1–22](#)

Big Idea: *True discipleship requires both vigilance and a commitment to uphold the truth of the Gospel amidst the pervasive threats of false teachings.*

Opening Thoughts

During the first century, the early Christian church faced challenges related to false teachings and inappropriate conduct. The Jerusalem church contended with issues of dishonesty and jealousy, while the Corinthian church experienced instances of immorality, doctrinal disputes, and division. Peter is writing to churches in which doctrinal and moral heresy was being taught as truth.

In his second letter, Peter discussed two major issues: some people were denying the second coming ([2 Peter 1:16](#); [3:3-4](#)), and members of the church were rejecting the idea of a future judgment before God ([2 Peter 2:9-10](#); [3:7](#)).

Not believing in Christ's return and the coming judgement had led these church members to see no urgency to live moral or ethical lives. Consequently they were living in immorality. Possibly they even used Paul's emphasis on Christian liberty as a theological justification for their behavior. Peter sharply rebukes them. He not only condemns their beliefs as erroneous; he also clearly questioned if they were genuine Christians.

Like the early church the church today is facing an onslaught of false teachings. Peter is giving the church a strong warning concerning the deceptive tactics of false teachers who threaten to infiltrate the church and distort the truth of the Gospel. Peter paints a vivid picture of their corruption and the destructive paths they lead others down, calling believers to recognize and reject these falsehoods while upholding God's truth with boldness and grace.

Recognizing Rising Deception

[2 Peter 2:1–3](#)

¹ But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. ² And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed. ³ And in their greed they will exploit you with false words. Their condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.

In [2 Pet. 2:1–3](#), Peter is warning the church that false teachers have secretly come among the congregation. They are bringing with them destructive heresies. Peter says we can identify them by their lifestyle. The false teachers were motivated by a desire to secretly introduce destructive teaching, smear the gospel, and embezzle money from Christians. They will be controlled by sensuality and greed. They replace a biblical emphasis on sin, repentance, and holiness with an emphasis on self-esteem and felt needs.

When FBI agents seek to identify counterfeit currency, their training begins with a thorough study of authentic bills. Agents examine the color, paper quality, and printing techniques employed in legitimate notes. After extensive instruction and experience with genuine currency, they become adept at detecting counterfeits through careful visual inspection.

As followers of Christ, it is important to approach the study of scripture with diligence and discernment. A comprehensive understanding of true doctrine enables us to critically evaluate teachings and identify those that may be presented as the Word of God but are not aligned with sound doctrine. Possessing knowledge of the truth is essential for distinguishing between authentic instruction and misleading interpretations.

Remembering Past Judgments

[2 Peter 2:4-10](#)

⁴For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment; ⁵ if he did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; ⁶ if by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes he condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; ⁷ and if he rescued righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked ⁸ (for as that righteous man lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard); ⁹ then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment, ¹⁰ and especially those who indulge in the lust of defiling passion and despise authority. Bold and willful, they do not tremble as they blaspheme the glorious ones,

After outlining the behaviors of these false teachers, Peter went on to address their destiny and shared God's view of their actions. He references three widely known stories of judgement from Genesis to illustrate for his audience that God will indeed judge those who spread false teachings.

The Fallen Angels

“For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment”([2 Peter 2:4](#)). Peter is referring to the revolt that Lucifer led. One-third of the heavenly angels rebelled with lucifer against God. God cast them out of heaven and chained them in hell until the time of their judgement described in [Rev. 12:3-9](#). God has proven his justice from the beginning of time by discriminating in his judgment between angels that sinned and those that didn't.

Noah and the Flood

“if he did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly;” ([2 Peter 2:5](#)). Peter goes on to describe how God judged the ancient world ([Gen. 6-8](#)). However, in this example Peter makes it clear that God's righteous judgment also includes safeguarding those who are righteous. According to the account, humanity exhibited widespread wickedness, prompting divine judgment through a global flood. Noah and his family remained the sole survivors, attributed to Noah's righteousness character and God's divine protection.

God's justice is shown both by punishing the wicked and protecting the righteous, which should inspire us to uphold the truth of Scripture and stand against misleading teachings of our time.

Sodom and Gomorrah

“if by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes he condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly” (2 Peter 2:6). A third example of divine judgement is found in the account of Sodom and Gomorrah. In [Genesis 18-19](#), the narrative outlines the transgressions committed by these cities and Abraham’s subsequent attempt to intercede on their behalf. When ten righteous individuals could not be identified, the cities were destroyed, with only Lot and his family spared. As referenced by Peter, this episode serves as a cautionary illustration for those who lead unrighteous lives, indicating that such actions may result in severe consequences, including suffering and separation from God’s presence.

Peter wants us to remember that if God did not spare fallen angels, or wicked people who lived before the Flood, or the citizens of Sodom and Gomorrah, he would not spare these false teachers. These words that promised justice were a great comfort to those who were oppressed. God will punish all evildoers. These words also served as a warning to wanderers to not stray away from the truth. Some people would have us believe that God will save all people because he is so loving. But it is foolish to think that God will cancel the last judgment. Don’t ever minimize the certainty of God’s judgment on those who rebel against him.

Rejecting Corrupt Conduct

[2 Peter 2:11-22](#)

¹¹ whereas angels, though greater in might and power, do not pronounce a blasphemous judgment against them before the Lord. ¹² But these, like irrational animals, creatures of instinct, born to be caught and destroyed, blaspheming about matters of which they are ignorant, will also be destroyed in their destruction, ¹³ suffering wrong as the wage for their wrongdoing. They count it pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, while they feast with you. ¹⁴ They have eyes full of adultery, insatiable for sin. They entice unsteady souls. They have hearts trained in greed. Accursed children! ¹⁵ Forsaking the right way, they have gone astray. They have followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved gain from wrongdoing, ¹⁶ but was rebuked for his own transgression; a speechless donkey spoke with human voice and restrained the prophet’s madness. ¹⁷ These are waterless springs and mists driven by a storm. For them the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved. ¹⁸ For, speaking loud boasts of folly, they entice by sensual passions of the flesh those who are barely escaping from those who live in error. ¹⁹ They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption. For whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved. ²⁰ For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. ²¹ For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them. ²² What the true proverb says has happened to them: “The dog returns to its own vomit, and the sow, after washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire.”

Peter, in [2 Peter 2:10–22](#), presents one of the most graphic depictions of the nature and behavior of false teachers found anywhere in the Bible. Peter wanted the church to be able to recognize and reject false teachers.

False teachers often act with boldness and arrogance. They tend to be presumptuous and self-centered, showing little regard for others. Such individuals frequently disregard the rights, opinions, and interests of those around them. Their arrogance will not allow them to see reason. No amount of discussion or debate will stop them from doing or teaching as they please.

Peter writes that these false teachers who are by nature “*lower than the angels*” ([Ps. 8:5](#) nkjv), arrogantly considered themselves superior to angelic beings. The reality is that they are like unreasoning animals who have no rational capability, operating solely for self-indulgence and blind passion. But like the fallen angels, the false teachers will eventually be exposed and face eternal punishment in the lake of fire.

Peter called these false teachers blots and blemishes on the church. They did not even wait for the darkness of night to cover their deeds but preformed them in open daylight. The early church often participated in “*love feasts*” ([Jude 12](#)). The false teachers would pervert the church’s love feast by their immorality. They attended church meetings for two reasons: first to satisfy their own lust; second to capture converts for their cause. They frequently enticed vulnerable individuals who were unable to withstand their misleading reasoning.

There are still some people in the church today who argue that moral decisions are simply personal choices, believing that Christian freedom allows this. They say we should respectfully engage with those whose views on morality differ from biblical teachings, treating these differences as mere disagreements. However, Peter adamantly opposed such perspectives, and he strongly spoke out against rejecting Scriptural truth and moral principles.

Peter in [2 Peter 2:17-22](#), gives us several word pictures to portray those who pervert Christian doctrine. These people saw themselves as springs of freedom, but were actually waterless fountains, leaving others thirstier. They were foggy mists that obscured Christ’s teachings, creating confusion and darkness. Soon, they would find themselves separated from Christ’s presence in the gloom of eternal darkness.

These teachers spoke with confidence as they promoted their false doctrines. With empty words they proclaimed the filth of this world as Christian truth. They seduced unwary believers by appealing to fleshly desires. They appealed to the debauchery that these new believers had loved in the pagan lifestyles from which they had only recently escaped.. These false teachers corrupted the ignorant and unstable within the church with their confidence and apparently plausible arguments.

These false teachers did have an intellectual “*religious experience*” at some point in their past. They would boldly claim that their experience brought them into fellowship with the Lord. They would be able to explain “*the way of righteousness,*” and would use the Word of God to support their teachings. If they had not experienced some kind of “*religious conversion*” they would never have been able to get into the fellowship of the local assemblies.

However, simply knowing about Jesus Christ intellectually and being around other believers does not mean that the false teachers had accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior. Having claimed to have had a religious experience, they had then given themselves to the pursuit of greed and sexual immorality they had once escaped. Peter described their condition by quoting Jesus almost verbatim, *“the last state is worse for them than the first”* ([Matt 12:45](#)).

Peter describes their condition to be like a sick dog returning to its vomit or a washed pig returning to the mud. False teachers before knowing the message of the gospel had sinned in pagan ignorance but now they were sinning in the full light of the truth. They rejected the way of Christ, the way of forgiveness for their sins, the way of heaven. Instead, they chose hell over heaven and confirmed the judgment already confirmed upon them.

Although written over 1900 years ago, Peter’s words are as relevant today as when he wrote them. Today there are many in the church who are ready to defend the most immoral lifestyles and practices in the name of Christian liberty.

Like Peter we must oppose teachers of spiritual and moral error. Their teachings are destroying lives, damaging churches, and have eternal consequences for those deceived by them. God's grace provides us with the empowerment to rise above moral shortcomings, rather than granting approval to those insisting to live in sinful behavior. Christian liberty means freedom to live as God commands, not freedom to remain slaves of Satan and sin.

Communicating the message of salvation through Christ's cross is crucial, but it's also necessary to recognize spiritual and moral viewpoints that challenge this message. True believers have an obligation to recognize and respond to individuals who advocate these false teachings.

The church will always be attacked by the heresy of smooth-talking false teachers. The true followers of Christ must understand who these false teachers are and how they operate. The prescription against error is knowing the truth ahead of time so we can discern between the real and the false. This will require us to regularly spend time in God's Word and being a part of an authentic community of fellow believers.

Application

As you engage in discussions during Bible study or small group meetings, make a commitment to be actively vigilant about the teachings you encounter. If someone shares a thought or interpretation that seems off or inconsistent with Scripture, don’t shy away from asking clarifying questions. This not only helps you understand the truth more deeply but sets a standard for honesty in pursuing the Gospel. Approach these invitations for dialogue prayerfully, seeking wisdom from the Holy Spirit to uphold the truth gently and graciously.

Discussion Questions

1. What does Peter warn the church about regarding false teachers in 2 Peter 2:1–3?
2. What are some behaviors of false teachers mentioned by Peter, particularly in relation to their motivations?
3. What three historical examples from scripture does Peter use to illustrate God's judgment?
4. How can we actively discern and respond to false teachings in our modern context?
5. Why is it important to have a strong understanding of Scripture while discussing interpretations in small groups?

Lesson Four: Future Promises

Bible Passage: [2 Peter 3:1-18](#)

Big Idea: *Living in anticipation of Christ's return compels us to actively nurture our faith, engaging in good works that reflect His grace and prepare our hearts for the coming of the Lord.*

Opening Thoughts

Central to Christian doctrine is the belief that Jesus, following his death, resurrection, and ascension, will one day return in glory. While Jesus taught that the timing of this second coming remains unknown, numerous individuals have erroneously attempted to predict its occurrence. Nevertheless, despite these unsuccessful predictions, Christians continue to uphold the assurance of Jesus's eventual return.

Peter emphasized that God would ultimately judge false teachers who represented significant threats to Christian communities ([2 Pet. 2:1-22](#)). These individuals denied the concept of Christ's return. In chapter 3, verses 1-18, Peter firmly affirmed the certainty of the Day of the Lord—Christ's return. He clarified in verses 3:1-2 that his purpose in both letters was to reinforce the believers' understanding by reminding them of the teachings delivered by Old Testament prophets and the commandment provided by Jesus through the apostles.

Approximately two thousand years have passed since Jesus ascended, and some people still question or deny that He will return. Predictions made by false prophets about exact dates have also led to increased skepticism. Nevertheless, Christians find confidence in God's Word, which assures them of Christ's eventual return. Peter encourages us to adopt a manner of living characterized by continual readiness for Jesus' return at any time.

Scoffers and the Sure Return

[2 Peter 3:1-7](#)

¹ This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, ² that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles, ³ knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. ⁴ They will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation." ⁵ For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, ⁶ and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. ⁷ But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.

As Peter concludes his second letter, his sense of urgency and conviction is clearly conveyed. His intention was to remind his readers of the principles they already understood, thereby enabling them to employ spiritual discernment to identify and address the spread of false teachings. Similar to the recipients of Peter's letter, contemporary readers will also encounter efforts to misrepresent the message for personal advantage. To prepare for this, it is essential to rely on the enduring truths articulated by both

the prophets and apostles. Peter underscores that all events—past, present, and future—have been anticipated by the Old Testament prophets and by the teachings of Jesus Christ as delivered through the apostles.

Peter reminded his readers that, above all, there will always be scoffers in the “*last days*.” The “*last days*” refers to the period between Christ’s first coming and His eventual return, which is also known as the “*Age of Grace*” or the “*Church Age*.”

In the early church, false teachers challenged the doctrine of Christ’s return by claiming it was merely a myth. They pointed to the lengthy interval since Jesus’ ascension as evidence for their position, proposing that the world would continue unchanged indefinitely. In response, Peter refuted these arguments by referencing the acts of creation and the flood as instances of God’s direct involvement in human history. He reminded them that the same divine word responsible for creating the world also brought judgment upon it. The day is coming when Christ will return to take home believers ([John 14:1-13](#)). But it also needs to be understood that He is coming in judgement on those who have rejected Him ([Heb 9:27](#))

Patience and the Promise

[2 Peter 3:8–10](#)

⁸ But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. ⁹ The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. ¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

Peter underscores that a final judgment day is approaching—an event set by God the Father, who alone knows its exact timing. He points out that God views time differently than humans do ([2 Peter 3:8](#)), and reminds us that God always keeps His promises; therefore, if God has proclaimed a final judgment, it will surely happen.

Peter encourages us to see the waiting period as an opportunity for growth. He believes that the extra years granted by God allow more people the chance to accept the gospel and return to Him. Each new day reflects God’s mercy, offering us another moment to draw closer to Him and support those around us.

We must remember that there are countless souls who remain unaware of God’s promise and are lost without salvation. Peter highlights the value of God’s patience, encouraging believers not to hesitate but to actively share the gospel, remain hopeful, and fulfill their responsibilities with confidence—regardless of doubts or outside opinions.

When we are feeling anxious about world events and uncertainty about the future, [2 Peter 3:8-10](#) reminds us of the importance of recognizing God’s larger plan. Instead of being passive while awaiting Christ’s return, it is crucial to acknowledge both our limited perspective on time and our duties. We should collaborate with God toward His deepest desire for humanity—repentance and faith. It’s vital to stay ready for Christ’s coming at any moment, yet also plan our service as though His return could be far off.

Pursue Holiness and Hope

[2 Peter 3:11–18](#)

¹¹ Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, ¹² waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! ¹³ But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. ¹⁴ Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace. ¹⁵ And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, ¹⁶ as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures. ¹⁷ You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability. ¹⁸ But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

Peter concluded his letter by providing guidance for Christians who anticipate the return of Jesus Christ. He did not advise altering daily routines or selling personal possessions. Instead, Peter emphasized the importance of living each day in accordance with God's will, so that believers would be prepared to account for their management of time, abilities, and resources at Christ's appearing.

While the believers may have been growing restless as they awaited the Lord's return, Peter encouraged them to remember that the delay was actually a sign of God's patience. Contrary to the false teachers who claimed the delay showed God's negligence, Peter emphasized that *"God is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance"* ([3:9](#)). In other words, God's patience allows more people the opportunity to hear and accept the gospel, resulting in salvation for many.

When we understand that Christ's return will bring us into the eternal presence of God and the day of the Lord will bring judgement and punishment for the lost. So the longer we have to wait for Christ's return the more opportunity we have to share the gospel and see lost souls saved. We can view Christ's delayed return as an expression of His mercy and grace, giving everyone an opportunity to be saved.

Peter encourages us to have patience. Just as Paul had written, false teachers, who are ignorant and unstable will twist scripture to meet their lifestyle or desired outcome. In doing so they prevent the proclamation of the true gospel, hindering the ability of the lost to be saved.

One way to be able to discern false teachings and live the holy life that we are called to, is by studying the Word of God. By doing so we will be able to have a more comprehensive knowledge of the truth. As we study the Word of God we should allow it to scrutinize our lives and help us make the necessary corrections to live more holy and godly lives.

In the final lines of Peter's letter, he encourages believers to remain vigilant against the errors of false teaching and to maintain their stability. The ability to uphold steadfast faith depends on growing in scriptural knowledge and consistently applying these principles in daily life. It is important to recognize

that possessing knowledge and acting upon it are distinct, and true growth requires both understanding and implementation.

Application

In a culture filled with chaos it is easy to become overwhelmed by external pressures and doubts. We can become complacent in our faith. Peter urges us to pursue holiness diligently. We have to prepare ourselves to withstand the dangers of false teachings. The best way to counter this is to have a daily commitment to read the Bible and allow God to convict and encourage you. Also join a small group at your church where you can discuss scripture and seek truth together. In this supportive environment, share your struggles and ask questions, helping to strengthen each other's faith against misleading ideas. We were never supposed to live the Christian life alone, but in community.

Discussion Questions

1. What did Peter say would occur in the last days? ([3:3](#))
2. How does Peter address the issue of time in relation to God's promises and His return?
3. What reason did Peter give his readers for living holy and godly lives? ([3:11-12](#))
4. How can you change your routine to reflect your hope for Christ's return?
5. What practical steps can you take this week to share the hope of Christ's return with someone in your life?

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