

Study of II Peter

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I. Introduction/Background

- A. Before beginning our study of II Peter, we will briefly review I Peter. I and II Peter are the only two letters of Peter that have survived. Although he is not listed as the author of any of the gospels, it is generally agreed among scholars that the Gospel of Mark is based upon the teaching and preaching of Peter.
- B. Peter was the leader among the apostles and was probably Jesus' best friend on earth. He is the one Jesus groomed to be the leader of his church, and even Peter's denial of Jesus on the night he was arrested did not change Jesus' choice, as we saw at the end of John's gospel when Jesus told Peter three times to "Feed my sheep."
- C. The Peter we met in the gospels was headstrong and sometimes rash. Only Peter pulled a knife and cut off the ear of one of the people arresting Jesus at Gethsemane. Only Peter got out of the boat on the Sea of Galilee to try to walk on the water to meet Jesus.
- D. But the Peter we meet in I Peter, and now in II Peter, is an old man, tempered by his years of service to his Master and Lord, but no less passionate about Jesus. He has seen remarkable things in his life—some of which are described in the book of Acts—and the power of the Holy Spirit has flowed through him with healings and signs that were unprecedented. His years of service have made him humble rather than prideful, and his faith is now unshakeable as he faces death, as Jesus himself has revealed to him.
- E. The best estimates are that I Peter was written around A.D. 64. II Peter was written about two years later—A.D. 66, shortly before his death by crucifixion at the hands of the Romans. Both letters are written from Rome where he was imprisoned by the Roman government.
- F. It's not by coincidence but rather intentional that these two letters were written within the last few years of his life. He had words of encouragement and enlightenment for the church, but he also had words of warning, as we will clearly see in II Peter. It was a difficult time for the church, and he set out to remind his readers of the grace of God and to exhort them to remain faithful to the end.

II. Review of I Peter

- A. Chapter 1. I Peter, like II Peter, was written to Christians scattered throughout the Roman Empire. The Christians in Rome had been run out of Rome by the government—unless, like Peter, they were in jail. It was a tough time for Christians throughout the empire, and Peter wrote to encourage them. He reminds them they have been chosen by God, just as the Jews had been chosen centuries previously. Because of their faith in Jesus Christ, they have entered into a new life in the Spirit now and should look forward to the inheritance which Jesus promised. He also reminds them that, although times were tough, they were living in the times the prophets of old looked forward to—the time of God’s grace through his Son who died for the remission of their sins, and they should rejoice in that.

Peter also reminds them that because they have received God’s grace they must live lives worthy of that grace and not live as they did before receiving it. They must live their lives in a state of holy awe and reverence for what God in Christ has done for them. Although God’s grace is free, a terrible price—the very blood of Jesus—has been paid for our freedom from the wages of sin, and we should be mindful of that and live accordingly. Verses 22-25 capture the good news—the gospel—they have received. (Read these verses)

- B. Chapter 2. In this chapter, Peter discusses further how differently they are to live their lives because of the great grace that has been bestowed on them, and that they will become mature Christians as they live out their faith. In verses 4-6, Peter reminds them Jesus is the cornerstone of this new covenant with God, and quotes Isaiah and Psalm 118 to point out the prophets had foretold that the Messiah would be rejected by the Jews; he was a stone which caused them to stumble, a statement which Jesus also made to the Jewish leaders. Verses 9 and 10 are simply some of the most beautiful and hopeful verses to be found in scripture (read them).

In verses 11-17, Peter urges them to abstain from “the desires of the flesh.” This phrase is often interpreted as referring only to sexual sins, but it is much broader than that. It refers to any kind of selfish desires which we have that are contrary to God’s will. Remember, James said in his letter that it is our selfish desires that lead to sin, and Peter is echoing this thought. They lead to “war within our souls.” He reminds them Christians are aliens in this world; we look forward to a better world to come that Christ has prepared for us. But in this world we must conduct ourselves honorably among unbelievers. We must obey the government and be good citizens while obeying God and loving one another.

In verses 18-25 he has advice for slaves to be obedient to their masters, even those who are harsh with them. These verses are hard for us to read today, but there was a good reason for such advice, as I have set out in detail in the full outline of I Peter.

- C. Chapter 3. In verses 1-6, Peter lays out advice for wives which is also hard for modern ears to hear. However, as with slaves, there were good reasons for such advice, which are explained in detail in the outline and which were, in my opinion, directed at the circumstances of the times. In verse 7, Peter addresses husbands and instructs them to treat their wives with respect as an equal before God—something that was almost never found in the Jewish or Roman culture of the time. He also warned Christian husbands their prayers would be hindered if they did not honor their wives and treat them with respect.

In verses 8-12 Peter addresses in detail how Christians are to live. These verses are similar to Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount. We are to live in unity—by which he means unity in Christ. We must be merciful; we must show brotherly love; we must have tender hearts towards others, and not just towards other Christians; we must be humble; we are not to retaliate and repay evil for evil but repay with a blessing.

In verses 13-22, he reminds them that if they are suffering for doing right rather than for doing wrong, they would receive a blessing, so live righteously and don't be afraid. He also advises them to be ready with a defense of their faith at any time, especially when being oppressed, for Jesus himself suffered for doing right.

- D. Chapter 4. In this chapter, Peter emphasizes that Jesus himself suffered, and as his followers we may have to suffer also. We must have the same resolve that Jesus had—to be obedient to the Father no matter how difficult. He reminds them they have already spent too much of their lives living in disobedience. Now that the end is near, they must be serious about obedience to God and discipline themselves. Above all, they must show love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins.

In verses 12-19, Peter advises his readers not to be surprised by the ordeal they are facing; suffering and persecution was the natural expectation for them, just as Jesus also suffered. They were being tested, and Peter tells them they should rejoice for sharing in the sufferings of Christ. It was a tough message he was sending them, but he emphasized they should ensure they were suffering for righteously following Christ, not for doing wrong. Righteous suffering should bring celebration, not disgrace. He wraps up this chapter warning that the day of judgment is coming, and judgment will begin with the house of God.

- E. Chapter 5. In this chapter, Peter addresses the leadership of the church—the elders. Peter points out he himself is an elder. What he recommends is what we today call “servant leadership.” They should carry out their duties as God would have them do it, enthusiastically, but not for personal gain. They should watch over the flock as good shepherds. He also addresses the youth of the church and

admonishes them to accept the authority of the elders. Each should be humble with one another.

In verses 6-12, Peter summarizes how we should live. “Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you.” He closes the letter with final greetings, mentioning that Mark was there with him. Peter provided most of the information for that gospel, and it was completed while Mark was there with Peter in prison in Rome.

III. II Peter 1:1-2 Salutation

- A. The greeting is from Peter who is writing to the same groups of Christians he wrote to in his first letter—almost all of whom were Gentile Christians. There are a few things noteworthy in his greeting. First, note that he refers to himself not as Simon Peter, but Simeon Peter. Peter is, of course, the name that Jesus gave to him; it means the Rock. But his name is reported everywhere else as Simon, not Simeon. With one exception. In Acts 15:14, James, the brother of Jesus, refers to him as Simeon in the middle of the Council of Jerusalem, when the church opened its doors completely to the Gentiles to become Christians without first converting to Judaism. Peter seems to pick up on what he was called there when he addresses this letter to “those who have received a faith as precious as ours.” Who are these who have received an equally precious faith? Gentiles. And Peter wants them to know they are precious to God and to him and to the church just as much as any Jewish Christian. His prayer and greeting is that they have grace and peace through God our Father and Jesus Christ. Note also that he refers to himself as a slave of Jesus Christ, as Paul usually did also. This has reference to his total obedience to Christ. His calling was to do what his Master told him to do.

IV. II Peter 1:3-15 The Christian’s Call and Election

- A. In verses 3 and 4, Peter tells them they have received everything they need for a godly life. Indeed, it is Christ’s divine power demonstrated in the resurrection that enables them to have life, and to be able to live it in a godly manner. And, he tells them, they have received this power through their knowledge of Christ who calls us by his own glory—a reference to the resurrection—and goodness. The goodness Peter speaks of is Jesus’ right relationship with the Father arising out of his own obedience. It is particularly important that they hear the message of the power of God working within them at this time. They are suffering persecution, but they have not been left alone. The same power that raised Jesus from the dead was working within their lives and giving them all they needed for life and godliness.
- B. He reminds them Jesus has made great promises to them—forgiveness of sin, redemption to a new, different life in the Spirit, eternity in heaven with Jesus Christ and the saints. If they rely upon those promises and remain faithful, they will be able to escape the corruption that is in the world because of lust. As we discussed in James, and also in I Peter, the word lust refers to any ungodly desire

in our hearts; it's not limited to sexual sin. Peter is saying that through faith in Jesus Christ, we will not succumb to all the temptations of this world with all of the adverse consequences such temptations bring. Instead, we will become more like Jesus, which is what his reference to becoming a participant in the divine nature refers to. God made mankind in the image of God, and it's God's will that we reflect his image in how we live our lives. Peter is reminding us that as we become more and more conformed to the image of Christ, we become participants of the divine nature, the very life Jesus said he came to give us abundantly.

- C. So, how do we do this? How do we become more God-like, more Christ-like? In verses 5-7, he gives us the ladder of virtues that we are to pursue. Before addressing the ladder of virtues, however, we need to address the roles of grace, faith and obedience in the Christian life. We obtain our salvation—our relationship with Jesus Christ—through the grace of God; we don't earn it; God graciously gives it to us. That means Jesus accepts us as we are if we believe in him and commit to him. It doesn't take great faith on our part, but it does require us to believe in Jesus and put our faith in him. Although he accepts us as we are, he doesn't want us to stay as we are. He wants us to change, to become more like Christ in our character, our faith, and our behavior. It requires discipline and effort on our part, although it is God who changes us as we are obedient to him.
- D. So, how do we discipline ourselves to become more Christ-like, more mature Christians? Peter instructs his readers to pursue these virtues. The first virtue is faith, which is essential to our relationship with Jesus and the Father. We support our faith by goodness, which means avoiding sin, doing instead the right thing as God commands. As we live our lives pursuing goodness, we gain knowledge—about God, about ourselves and how to rely upon him in different situations in life. As we gain knowledge, we learn better how to have self-control and not allow the storms and problems of life detract us from our relationship with God. Over time our endurance builds so that we are steadfast in our faith, and we do not lose heart. Endurance leads to more consistently doing God's will rather than our own, which is the very definition of godliness—acting in a God-like manner. And finally, as we continue to act in a godly manner, we will have mutual affection and love for others, particularly other Christians, although we are to love unbelievers as well.
- E. What Peter is so beautifully describing here is how we become mature Christians. He points out in verses 8-9 that if we adopt these virtues and become mature Christians, we will no longer be ineffective or unfruitful. The corollary of this is that if we do not pursue these virtues we may well become unfruitful and blind, forgetting the futility of our former way of life. We may return to old patterns of behavior, which interfere with our relationship with God. Therefore,

Peter tells us to “confirm our call and our election.” By this, Peter reminds them, and us, that it was God who called us, not we who called him. We must remind ourselves of this often, with gratitude and discipline. If we do so, we will never stumble. By this, he doesn’t mean that we will never sin, for God is always ready to forgive our sins. He means we will never lose our faith, and we will be welcomed into the kingdom of Heaven.

- F. In verses 12-15, Peter, in a very pastoral manner, tells them he is reminding them of what they already know, and he intends to keep on reminding them until his death, which Christ has revealed will come soon. He also tells them he is even making efforts to remind them of all he has told them about Jesus even after he is gone. This is undoubtedly a reference to the gospel he was working on with Mark, whose name is on the gospel, although it is based upon the preaching and teaching of Peter.

V. II Peter 1:16-21 Eyewitnesses of Christ’s Glory

- A. Having just told them he plans to keep on reminding them of what Christ has done for us, even after his death, he says, in essence, “We didn’t make this story up. We haven’t created clever myths; we have told you what we have actually seen and heard about the Lord Jesus Christ. We know about his honor and glory because we actually saw it on the Mount of Transfiguration, and heard the Almighty say from heaven, ‘This is my Son, my Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.’”
- B. Peter goes on in verse 19 to say this is a confirmation of the prophecies given by the prophets in the Old Testament. So, they had the revelations given by the Old Testament prophets who looked forward to the day in which the readers now lived, and they had the word of eyewitnesses, such as Peter, who saw the power, glory, and majesty of the Messiah. With all of this evidence, Peter admonishes them, you would do well to pay close attention to what we have told you about Jesus, which confirms all the prophets foretold about him.
- C. Peter wraps up this point by reminding them that prophecies are not a matter of one’s own personal interpretation of scripture, because the words of scripture came from men and women moved by the Holy Spirit. The words they wrote were from God. It is a point we must remember. There is a tendency in Christendom to reinterpret scripture based upon the fashions of the times. And although we must always be ready to re-examine scripture to see how it *applies* to ever-changing circumstances, it is not our prerogative to *change* the meaning of scripture. It is God’s word that should guide our thinking and our actions, and not our private opinions or secular culture.

V. **2 Peter 2:1-3 False prophets and their end**

- A. In this chapter, Peter delivers some of the sternest warnings found in scripture about false prophets. He makes the point that just as false prophets arose in the times of Old Testament scriptures, false prophets will arise among them, and they should be prepared for this.
- B. When we look at false prophets in the Old Testament and those in the New Testament, there are some similarities. First, they were more interested in gaining popularity than in telling the truth. They would usually tell the people what they wanted to hear even if it wasn't the truth. Jeremiah said (Jer. 6:14) the false prophets announced, "Peace, peace, when there was no peace." In the days of Jehoshaphat, Zedekiah, a false but popular prophet, said that Israel would defeat the Syrians, whereas Micaiah, a true prophet, foretold disaster if Jehoshaphat went to war. Jehoshaphat did go to war and perished tragically (See I Kings 22). There are many other similar examples of false prophets telling the people what they wanted to hear, and it did not go well for the Israelites.

Second, false prophets were usually interested in personal gain. When any prophet gains materially or financially from their prophecies it is usually a warning sign. Micah, an Old Testament true prophet said, "The priests teach for hire, and the prophets divine for money." (Micah 3:11) We find similar quotes in the New Testament. (Titus 1:11; I Timothy 6:5)

Third, false prophets usually fail to live up to the calling in their personal lives. Their personal lives are often a seduction to evil rather than an attraction to godliness.

Fourth, false prophets always lead people further away from God rather than closer to God.

- C. Peter warns that the false prophets who will come into the churches will introduce heresies. But as they do this, they won't claim to be opposed to Christian teaching. They will claim to be proclaiming true Christianity. In fact, what they are actually doing is corrupting Christian teaching. One good example: One of the tenets of the gospel is the concept of *grace*. It means unmerited favor. God forgives our sins, not because we deserve it, but he accepts our faith in him and forgives our sins because Jesus has already paid any penalty due for our sins. The heretics didn't *deny* the concept of grace; they corrupted it. They claimed that because God was so gracious, we bring honor to God by sinning all the more so God can continually demonstrate his grace by forgiving us more. All the Apostles rejected this heresy. The heretics also denied the idea of Jesus dying a sacrificial death by which he purchased our salvation. By this, they rejected the gospel, bringing destruction on themselves.

VI. II Peter 2:4-10 Warning against sin

- A. In these verses, Peter gives a very pointed warning that God certainly knows how to punish sin; he gives several examples from the Old Testament of God bringing judgment against sinners, and he also points out God knows how to save the godly from the judgment to come. The examples he gives are: 1) The fallen angels whom he cast into Hell to be kept there until the judgment; 2) The ancient world that was destroyed by flood, and from which he saved Noah and his family because they were righteous; 3) The cities of Sodom and Gomorra, which were destroyed by fire, but from which he saved Lot and his family (except Lot's wife whom after departing Sodom looked back—against God's command—and was instantly turned into a pillar of salt). So, Peter uses these examples to emphasize God know how to protect the faithful and punish the wicked, particularly those who live dissolute lives and despise authority. The implied warning is that we have been warned against living undisciplined and dissolute lives, but we are reassured that god will spare us if we are faithful.

VII. 2 Peter 2:11-16 The nature of the false prophets and bold sinners

- A. Peter goes on to describe the lives lived by the false prophets and other bold sinners. They are totally self-centered and live by the creed, "I want what I want when I want it." He says they are even bold enough to slander "the glorious ones" which refers to angels, whereas angels do not bring a slanderous judgment from the Lord against them, only a word of rebuke from the Lord, leaving judgment to God alone.
- B. Essentially, Peter says, they are little different from animals, living primarily by instinct. What is missing from their lives is true wisdom from God. As human beings we are created with certain instincts that if properly disciplined and used will protect us. We instinctively know not to put our hands on a hot stove or into a fire. Our fight or flight response is there to protect us. Other appetites, desires, or instincts must be disciplined. We can't eat everything we see or want; we can't drink every drink we might want; we can't have sex with everyone who is attractive to us. We can't treat everyone else with contempt without having serious repercussions. He compares such people to Balaam, who was a false prophet whose story is told in Numbers, chapters 22-26. The story makes clear that although Balaam eventually submitted to God, he longed for the promised rewards which King Balak of Moab promised him, and he was rebuked by his own donkey which spoke to him with a human voice. Eventually, Balaam was killed by the Israelites because he was partially responsible for leading the Israelites astray. He became increasingly known as a type and example of a false and misleading prophet.

VIII. 2 Peter 2:11-22 The perils of relapse

- A. Peter continues his denunciation of evil men. He says they flatter only to deceive. They entice people back to evil ways when they have just departed from living a life in disobedience to God. They promise the people freedom but are in fact slaves to sin themselves—for we are slaves to whatever masters us.
- B. It is essential as Christians that we understand what scripture means when it refers to freedom. For example, in 2 Corinthians 3:17, Paul writes, “Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom.” What he means by this is that we are free from sin, for sin masters us and whatever masters us enslaves us. On the other hand, when the word freedom is used in a modern secular context, it refers to an absence of restraints. We refer to the freedoms we have as Americans; by that we mean that our government places fewer restraints on us than the governments of most other countries, particularly autocratic ones. We tend to believe that the *government* should not place any undue restraints on us beyond those necessary to maintain public order and safety. In the church, however, we recognize many restraints God places on us—such as those spelled out in the Ten Commandments, and in the Sermon on the Mount. We must live within these God-imposed restraints to live a life of obedience to God. What Peter is warning his readers of in this passage is that the so-called “freedom” the false prophets offer will lead them into slavery to sin, not true freedom, which only God can offer. He compares such promises as waterless springs or mists driven by a storm. They don’t deliver what they promise, and those making such promises will have greater punishment for leading others astray.
- C. The net result of someone coming to Christ and tasting of the life of communion with God, but then returning to the old life, brings forth one of the strongest warnings made in scripture. Peter says it would be better for them never to have known the way of righteousness. He compares the situation to a dog turning back to its own vomit or a pig being washed only to wallow in the mud. This is what Jesus was talking about in Luke 11:26 when he described the unclean spirits returning to a person after being driven out. When the unclean spirits return the last state of the person is worst than the first. This does not mean we return to a worse state every time we sin, but this is what will happen if we reject Christ and turn from the faith.
- D. These warnings of Peter are hard to hear, but it is important that we hear them. Not everyone who proclaims “Thus says the Lord” has God’s interests or ours in mind, as scripture warns. We must test any instruction we receive by scripture to confirm it, and we must be skeptical of anyone who promises freedom to us that ignores the restraints on us given by Christ himself.

IX. 2 Peter 3:1-2 The principles of Peter's preaching

- A. Peter reminds them that he is writing for a second time, as he did previously, to remind them of what the prophets foretold and what Jesus has commanded them. In these few verses we find a few principles that are present in all of Peter's teachings. 1) He believed in the value of repetition, as we have seen repeatedly; 2) He believed in the value of reminding his readers of the truths revealed to them previously; It's one reason we should engage with scripture daily; 3) He believed in the value of a compliment as we have seen in both I Peter and II Peter; 4) He believed in the unity of scripture: there were scriptures from the prophets who foretold the coming of Christ; there were the gospels about Christ; and there were the stories and letters of the apostles who brought the good news about Christ.

X. 2 Peter 3:3-7 The Promise of the Lord's coming and its denial

- A. Here we find another warning from Peter. He has already condemned the heretics for their corruption of the gospel. Now, he says they will deny that there will ever be a second coming of Christ. Nothing has really changed they will say; everything goes on as it did before. This is an argument one hears today from skeptics who deny that Jesus died on a Roman cross and was raised from the dead. They point out it has been two thousand years now since his death and he hasn't come back yet, so, they say, he must not be coming back.
- B. In short, the critics were saying we live in a stable world where things don't change all that much over time. They denied the resurrection of Jesus because people just don't rise from the dead; they don't return to life after dying. Peter's response to this argument is that the world is *not* eternally stable. It was created by God in the beginning and formed out of water. Later, when the world became totally corrupt, God destroyed the earth by water. God will someday destroy the world again, but this time by fire on the "Day of the Lord," which is judgment day when Christ will return to judge the quick and the dead. So, Peter is saying, the scoffer shouldn't assume that everything will remain the same. In referring to the world being destroyed someday by fire, he was relying on numerous Old Testament scriptures that foretold the destruction of the world by fire. But the scriptures teach that the destruction of the world by fire will lead to the creation of the new heaven and the new earth, a new world characterized by righteousness unlike the present world.

XI. 2 Peter 3:8-10 Time is different with God

- A. Peter continues his argument against the skeptics and scoffers who said that there is no second coming of Christ because if it were going to happen it already would have happened. Here, Peter is making another point to encourage his readers to remain faithful and obedient. Time is not the same to God as it is to mankind. We are finite and become anxious and impatient easily. Given our short lifespans that is

somewhat understandable. But given God's eternal existence, time is not the same to him. A thousand years to him is less than a single day to us humans. So, God is not being dilatory regarding Christ's return; rather, it shows his patience and his desire that none should perish on the day of judgment. He wants all to come to repentance. Every day that God delays Christ's return—which will be a day of judgment—is an opportunity, another day of mercy in which God's righteous judgment is postponed.

- B. But when the day of judgment comes, Peter says, it will come like a thief in the night—in other words unexpectedly. As Jesus pointed out in Matthew 24, we must be watchful because his second coming will be similar to the coming of the flood in the days of Noah; no one expected it except Noah and his family. Peter also says that the second coming will usher in the destruction of our world by fire, which was foretold by numerous Old Testament prophets. Obviously, this is a scary time, particularly for those who have rejected Christ, but for those who have accepted Christ, we can be assured we will dwell with Him in the new heaven and the new earth which God has promised. Thus, his return is not a day to dread, but one of hope for all who put our trust in Christ. My personal view is we are probably better off not trying to figure out all of the details of how this will come about. We just need to remember that Jesus said, "I am going to prepare a place for you so that where I am you may be also."

XII. 2 Peter 3:11-14 How we should then live

- A. Having just presented an apocalyptic picture of what is to come, Peter urges his readers to live lives of disciplined holiness and godliness. We have life eternal to look forward to, but in the meantime, we must be faithful to him who is faithful to us. He says that by doing so we will hasten the coming day of judgment when this world will pass away and the new heaven and new earth will appear. He is not saying we control when the day of judgment will come—that decision belongs to the Father alone—but we should look forward to our permanent home with Christ where righteousness abounds. After all, that is part of the Lord's Prayer which we pray all our life: "Thy kingdom come. . ."
- B. In verse 14, Peter summarizes by saying that while we await the Day of the Lord, which is the second coming of Jesus, to be followed by the new heaven and the new earth, we should live "at peace, without spot or blemish." In other words, we should be living in obedience to God; our lives should reflect the faith in him whom we profess. There is an implicit warning that we must live in obedience to Christ.

XIII. 2 Peter 3:15-18 Summary and final words of warning

- A. He reminds his readers once more that the Lord is being patient by not hastening the day of judgment; we should regard it as salvation for us.

- B. He follows up this reminder by telling them his message is the same as Paul's has been in all of the letters he has written. By the time 2 Peter was written, most if not all of Paul's letters had circulated through the churches. He makes an interesting comment that some of the things Paul wrote are hard to understand, but he says the heretics and scoffers have twisted what Paul wrote "to their own destruction." In other words, they were corrupting what Paul had written, just as they had corrupted what Peter had preached. Note that Peter said they did the same thing to Paul's writings as they did "to other scriptures." So, by this time, Paul's letters were already being considered scripture. One such corruption of Paul's teaching was that due to the emphasis Paul put on faith—"Salvation is by faith alone"—our behavior or actions were unimportant. This was the corruption that James addressed in his letter when he pointed out that claiming to have faith without it showing up in our works was futile.
- C. Peter tells them they have been forewarned; therefore, they must not follow these false heresies; if they do, they will lose their stability in their faith and be led astray. Furthermore, they can't claim ignorance as an excuse for sin or for following false doctrines because they have been warned. They must continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ. These words are just as applicable to us as they were to the first century Christians, and we ignore them at our own peril.