

# REMEMBER - KNOW - BEWARE

## 2nd PETER

Thoughts come from a wide variety of sources. Some from messages I have heard from individuals, some from assemblies Bible studies, some from home life and some from books I have read. The Holy Spirit is the Teacher who makes them real to me.

- "Be Alert," by Warren W. Wiersbe. Victor Books - SP Publications Inc.
- "What the Bible Teaches, II Peter," by G.P. Waugh. John Ritchie Ltd.
- "The Life Application Bible." Tyndale House and Zondervan
- "The new Defender's Bible," World Publishing

A caring person who is concerned with the life and well-being of others, does not seek to help only once and then forget those for whom he cares. That person will go back again and again to see how those who struggle under external trials are coping. Discernment and experience will also make the caring person to not just try to help the suffering ones dealing with their problems, but will also seek to help them with the inward struggles that such trials cause. Peter had written a letter to the Lord's people who were once "not a people, but are now the people of God," as to how to live when suffering and trials from without have to be endured. In this second letter a more insidious challenge faces the people of God. The false teaching of Gnosticism had invaded the assemblies of God's people.

Opposition by its very nature never stops being opposed to those who do not submit to its dictates. The opposition of the world, often comes from open, outward challenges against those who will not adapt to a worldly lifestyle and doing the same things others do. The opposition of our flesh will pressure us to avoid any embarrassment by tempting us to conform as much as possible to that which the majority of people consider normal living. The opposition of the devil, uses to advantage the other two enemies and then adds a more spiritual and religious dimension to them. Satan gets those who profess to be the people of God, and instructs them as to how best to stop the growth of the real children of God.

It was to counteract the inroads of false doctrine, heresy and the activity of cults that Peter wrote this letter of warning. He knew he was soon going to die. He also knew that false teachers would be a greater danger and more deadly to those who had received "precious faith" than outward opposition. It is possible for us to become complacent to the extent we allow heresy to color our thinking by listening to it or even reading about it "in order to have a better defense against it."

One who has been "over the road" for many years like Peter, can recognize "cunningly devised fables," while those who read books *about* the Bible and/or follow on-line teaching *about* the Bible, will not see the possible danger behind the opinions of men. The apostles John and Paul, as well as Peter, stressed the importance of the word of God in their final words. Especially in view of these "last days," we need those of spiritual discernment and practical wisdom to guide us through the spiritual minefield in which we live today. Peter knew it was important in his day - how much more in ours.

In order to be loyal to our Lord and doctrinal purity in days of apostasy and corruption, we need to heed warnings that are given by those who have gone before us. Peter makes reference in this epistle to his old age and soon-coming death. He also wrote of being on the Mount of Transfiguration, a description of Christ-likeness, the last days and the Lord's coming. This letter was to advise the Lord's people to exercise caution because of dangers that were around them. Both Jews and Gentiles are included so none would be deceived by the false teachers, and their own faith would be evident by their consistent behavior. To keep growing in the Lord we need to know God more, follow our Lord daily, be faithful in our obedience to Him and remember what we have been taught.

There are many false prophets and teachers today who are subtle and deceitful using biblical terms and phrases out of context and claiming they have new truth that has been revealed to them. The teaching they give is often dramatic and startling, so it appeals to the fleshly desires of unconverted people. By clamoring for attention and seeking allegiance to themselves, they undermine the knowledge of Christ and the word of God. In rejecting those who preach the word in the way it is written, those people set themselves up in a place of authority instead of understanding and practicing biblical Christianity.

Peter addresses the value of the knowledge of Christ to the believers in the first chapter. Then he examines and exposes the false teachers in chapter two, and in chapter three exhorts true believers to be mindful of the teaching they have received from the word of God; to not be ignorant of the last days and future events;

to be diligent in their Christian testimony; and to beware of the pressure of falsehood lest we listen to it, are swayed by it and get set aside from living by faith.

## **2nd Peter 1:1-2**

### **ABUNDANCE**

There are various ways people are identified to others who receive written words from those they have never seen. Probably the most accepted way is to use two names to establish credibility. In first Peter he used his name "Peter" because he was writing to Jewish believers who knew who he was. They were "scattered abroad" and were undergoing suffering and trials from without, because they were publicly known as Christians. The first words of second Peter are the two names of the apostle. Simon was quite a common name by which others in the New Testament were known. Simon the tanner was known by his occupation. Simon the leper was known by his sickness. Simon the Pharisee was known by his religion. Luke 2 tells us about a man named Simon who was "just and devout."

In this epistle Simon Peter is establishing precisely who is writing for the benefit of Gentile believers who would be hearing this letter read along with Jewish believers. He further adds to his credibility and identity by stating he is "a servant... of Jesus Christ." there are two ways one becomes a servant. One is by the choice of another person has captured a person and makes the captive a servant. Linked with this is the way one who was a debtor paid off the debt by becoming an indentured servant paying off the creditor with his or her labor. The other way one becomes a servant is by personal choice. Out of gratitude and appreciation one chooses to serve another gladly.

Simon Peter was a servant by choice who had heard the Lord Jesus Christ say, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." He left his business as a fisherman and was in the glad service of his Lord. How moving it must have been to him when he heard the Lord Jesus say, "Henceforth I call not servants ... but I have called you friends." What greater chains of chosen servant-hood can there be than was verbally expressed by the Lord who said, "I have loved you." Peter was a servant by choice who was a servant beyond the chains of his own love for the "Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me."

The second thing the man with two names states as his identity is "apostle of Jesus Christ." By these words he established not only his own choice, but his delegated authority. He made clear the fact that it was the One sent by the Father who had made him an apostle. He is writing to all on behalf of Jesus Christ. He had been selected to fulfill this God-given role and responsibility. It was on behalf of his Lord that he was writing and expressing truths that had to be told, but it was also in his heart to care for the people of God.

When God saved us and "called us with a holy calling," He had in mind that we would speak for Him and live for Him and others in such a way that they know we care for them. Even though we know there are no apostles now, we are built upon "the foundation of the apostles and prophets," we have been given by God gifts to be used for the benefits of others. Some divinely given gifts are people - like evangelists, pastors and teachers. Others are abilities beyond our natural talents to be used to meet needs of the Lord's people who gather in His name.

Peter makes it plain that the "righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ" goes beyond the "precious faith" he and those with him have, to include all who have been made righteous by God. These "obtained like precious faith" as an act of God's grace. God has given to the Gentiles the same blessing as He gave the Jews. This is not a statement of how much faith they had, but the fact that by the act of faith, God had enabled them to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for their personal salvation.

We are not in a position of measuring faith as criteria for accepting others as fellow believers. Not all people can express their faith in the same way, or with the same degree of confidence. But it is possible to determine by a person's attitude, and sometimes by the way words are used, if the faith they profess is "precious faith" to them. Facial expressions, tone of voice, and attitude all have a way of showing outwardly what one has within.

Grace and peace are here linked with our effort to know God and our Savior Jesus Christ. When we read the Bible, study its message, apply it to our lives and maintain fellowship with God through prayer - then grace and peace are real. Truth gives us the understanding we need to appreciate grace. The gift of grace when appreciated, gives us the gift of peace. Even though we have these gifts already, they are "multiplied" to where they are abundant as we participate in the truth that has been made available to us. The knowledge of God is where we get eternal life as a gift from Him. "Jesus our Lord" is where the practical working out of that which we have received becomes a daily reality.

The righteousness we have been given, and the "knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord" that is available to us, gives us the basis for successful living and service for God. The knowledge of our Lord lets us see things as He does, and teaches us how to live, act and serve Him in a way that pleases Him - our Lord. To be in harmonious relationship with Him, gives us the grace to serve well and in fellowship with Him. When that is true, then peace is real, even when under the pressure of the world and/or deceptive false teachers.

The more we learn of the righteousness of God and our Savior by faith, and the more we know of Him personally and obey Him as Lord, then the greater is our grace and peace - and consequently our effectiveness as a servant who has been given a role to fill for our Lord in this life.

## **2nd Peter 1:1**

### **PRECIOUS FAITH**

*To people and to God some things are truly valuable  
Spiritual things are so great each is beyond being saleable  
The word of God is precious [1Sa.3:1], wisdom is precious too [Pr.3:13-15]  
Each human soul is precious [1Sa.26:21], life itself is precious to you [1Kg.1:13]*

*The redemption of a soul is precious [Ps.49:8], the price of sin is paid  
By the precious blood of Christ [1Pe.1:19], when our sins on Him were laid  
The thoughts of God toward us are precious to our minds [Ps.139:17]  
The promises of God are precious [2Pe.1:4], not one failure will we find*

*Christ Himself is precious [Is.28:16], He is "the Preciousness" to me  
Faith itself is precious [2Pe.1:1], making unseen things reality  
The trial of faith is precious [1Pe.1:7], our future is secure  
The death of saints is precious [Ps.72:14], their home in heaven is sure*

*Peter knew the Lord, had seen Him face to face  
He met there alone with Him after Jesus from the grave was raised  
Faith to Peter was real, as precious faith is real to me  
All these valuable precious things, through the eyes of faith I can see*

## **2nd Peter 1:3-9**

### **THESE THINGS**

The faith which we have received by the gracious provision of God beginning with our personal trust in our Savior Jesus Christ, also provides for, and produces, "life and godliness." "Divine power" has given us all the things we need to be able to participate in the divine nature. When one is born into the family of God by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, we are complete - a complete person in the same way a baby is as complete as an older person. We are probably immature but completely a new creation in Christ with all the things we need for living for Christ and growing in the Lord.

It is God who from the eternal storehouse of His own being, has not held anything back that we need to sustain us and make us successful in our life for Him. Our access to these things is through our knowledge of Him. The power to grow and mature doesn't come from within us but from God whose "glory" expresses the perfections of His attributes, and the excellence of His personal essence - who He is. His "virtue" is the inherent "goodness" of the things He does. There is excellence in everything God does. We are saved because of His glory and virtue.

Because of who our Lord is, He has called us to virtue in our character and conduct in this world. By His grace He has given us what we need to participate in the divine nature because we have been given the Holy Spirit within us. Our humanity and our Lord's deity will always be distinct, but even with our human limitations we are able to not only enjoy the "great and precious promises" but also satisfy our longing for freedom from sin's bondage. By the nature of these promises they separate us from the world and unto God. It is our Lord's moral goodness that gives us the power to escape the evil desires and defilement that comes from the world. When the new nature is nurtured and the practices of godly living are cultivated, there will be spiritual growth. Spiritual growth is not automatic so we must diligently use the grace given us by faith, discipline and cooperation with our Lord.

Faith is more than belief in certain facts. Faith takes action rather than fearful waiting with doubts as to the outcome of a matter. Godly living, developing Christian character and moral discipline all testify to real faith.

It is to this kind of faith the seven characteristics of godly living are linked. A tree generally produces several branches at once, each one different and each one finds the source of life in the trunk of the tree. That same principle is what takes place when these seven characteristics are added to faith. These are natural developments as we participate in the divine nature, rather than things we add one at a time. It is similar to a young child and a father working together on the same project. Both are engaged in the same work and by diligence and practice the young person becomes more and more proficient and engaged in the same work as the mature person.

The first on the list is "virtue." Some versions of the Bible use the word "goodness" but it is really more than that. It goes to the strength of character and spiritual valor that produces "excellence." When something is "excellent" it does what it is supposed to do and is capable of doing well. This is not honing our human capabilities but is reproducing divine qualities that make us more like our Savior. In our faith we exhibit virtue and also knowledge that is maturing. In applying this to our life experiences, it indicates by participating in the divine nature there will be the ability to discern what is the will of God. When we are obedient to the will of God our emotions and intellect will work together as well as our character and knowledge. These things will function effectively as we conduct our lives in a godly fashion.

Apparently false teachers were saying "temperance" was not all that important because deeds do not help us. Self-control is an action of faith that comes as a result of exercise of heart and discipline. Not only are leaders of the Lord's people to be temperate, but all of God's children need to display the characteristics of our heavenly Father and our Savior Jesus Christ. This happens when we have a controlled tongue, controlled mind, controlled speech and controlled practices. In a sense, temperance has to do with "pleasure," and "endurance" has to do with the problems we face and the pressures that are applied to seek to conform us to this ungodly world. "Patience" does not easily give up. Actually, patience adds to the whole person the strength of calmness and the persistence to wait for the best without compromising anything. Such trials as we may have to face can work for us rather than against us when patience is doing "its perfect work."

Many believers will not say of themselves that they are godly. "Godliness" is a characteristic that lets a believer live above all the pressures and passions that control the natural man. Godliness involves being unselfish and at the same time uncompromising. There is piety and reverence in one who is like God. Godliness is a very practical thing that can make right decisions and at the same time have lofty goals. Godliness does what is right because it is right - even if it leads us through trials and pain.

"Brotherly kindness" has to do with our affections toward our brothers and sisters in Christ. This is family love that begins with our Father, and then assures us of who we are. "We know we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." This is an on-going attitude toward others with their well-being as the motive behind it. There is another kind of love, "charity," that is the kind of love God showed toward us when we were in our sins. Brotherly kindness is love because we are like the objects of our love. "Charity" - love, means we love others in spite of differences we might have. This will include sacrifice for the benefit of others without expecting them to reciprocate. The value of the person in the sight of God is the motivating factor for charity.

When all of the characteristics are being developed, that growth because of being "added" to faith, produces the effect of a whole person living by faith in a way that reflects the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. The life of such a person who participates in the divine nature of Christ, gives God all praise and glory for anything that produces the image of our Lord. When these things are in use, we will not be unfruitful or unproductive. "Barren" (idle) people are ineffective and unfruitful.

That happens to those who are deliberately blind because they choose to close their eyes to the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. We remain ourselves in personality even though we are made like Christ. If we try to imitate other people, we lose that uniqueness that God gave us and we lose the ability to be like our Lord by choosing to be like another person. Like parents, God is not duplicating Himself in us, but is reproducing us to be like Him and still be ourselves. Our faith goes beyond what we believe, to being part of what we do. Salvation goes farther than changing our eternal destination to producing spiritual fruit and spiritual maturity. Faith produces good deeds as God works in us to do "His good pleasure."

**2Peter 1:4.** *"Whereof are given to us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."*

#### **DIVINE NATURE.**

*What are those promises that help me think like my God?*

*Those promises enumerated so plainly in His Word?  
Those promises that draw me much closer to my Lord?  
Those that are so foreign to the world?*

*I am a son, not a stranger, not an alien to Him.  
My life is now Christ, I'm not a servant to sin.  
There is a new kind of joy since this life did begin.  
Since the day this new life entered in.*

*Not just now to live, but to live with a reason;  
Not only today, but in every season;  
For I am in Christ, and truly want to please Him;  
Gives meaning to this new life I live.*

*There is the Spirit within who was given by promise.  
There is a nature that's new that wants to be honest.  
There is spiritual power to do all that God wants us,  
To show others true evidence of grace.*

*My name is heaven written in God's record book,  
Since the Savior of sinners, I most willingly took,  
There is evidence of His love, everywhere I look,  
And these promises are never removed.*

*Some promises are evident, I have already experienced them.  
Other will be realized: God reserves them till then.  
Some are in heaven, and I am able now to claim  
Because I have a nature like His.*

*"I know, Father, that I am not able to fully grasp the awesomeness of the divine nature to its fullest, but I do enjoy the reality of it in so many ways already. When I worship the Lord by myself or with others, there is no difficulty recognizing the evidence of the divine nature. We are able to appreciate so much of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, that it can only have come from God. I read what You have said about Him, and I can not help but say my personal, "Amen." He is altogether lovely!"*

## **2nd Peter 1:10-15**

### **MAKE SURE**

There is a casual approach to Christianity that leaves people with a false hope. It was happening in the time when Peter wrote this second epistle, and it is happening today. People hear a preacher or teacher who is a skilled and persuasive speaker, and based on what that person says, a person thinks all is well for eternity. In view of the seven evidences of faith in a child of God, our testimony needs to be confirmed by these seven qualities being cultivated and consistently practiced. God called us by His grace in time, and He elected by His sovereign choice in eternity past before the world began. The proof of the reality of faith in a person is not a casual stroll through life unaffected by the need all around us because we know all is well with us. There is inbred in a child of God, a motive of appreciation for God's salvation and all that is associated with it, that is evident in the hard work of holy living. Obedience and holiness confirm the fruits of faith are real, and those who give evidence of this will not give way to the pressures of false teaching, but will persevere.

The way we enter into the kingdom of God is what is in view here - not whether we enter or not. A person who is nearsighted and blind by deliberately neglecting to nurture their faith and those things that are "added," is in danger of entering heaven empty-handed. Being "diligent" (making every effort), indicates one is willing for God to use him for whatever work He chooses in His divine plans. A believer must cooperate with the Lord to have an "abundant entrance," a wonderful home-coming. Enthusiasm and hard work rather than laziness are linked with election and calling. We are not to be taking our position in the family of God for granted. By God's grace we can enjoy our security in Christ, and have meaning to life by "being fruitful in every good work." We have a clear vision of who we are and why we are here - and added to all that is an abundant entrance into heaven (the everlasting kingdom).

Peter recognized the necessity of going back over the basics of our faith because he was a man under authority to Christ. He had experienced failure and recovery. He knew the blessings of restoration and being brought back into usefulness. He had been commissioned by the Lord to feed the lambs and sheep, and could not neglect that responsibility. It was the right thing to do in view of the fact he was getting older, and the new "lambs" and older "sheep" would need to remember all he had taught them. "Diligence" indicates something has to be done and done now. A person who has been given spiritual responsibilities and recognizes their call from God, will endeavor to fulfill them as soon as possible and will do the best they can with what they have. The Lord's people have the right to expect those who brought the Gospel to them, to teach them. Repetition of basic truths are not always appreciated but are always needed.

By restating truth in the light of his impending death, Peter's words would have the added weight of a farewell address. He knew his body was only a tent, and he also knew from the Lord Himself that he would experience death as the words of Jesus "signified." We do not know when we are going to die or if the Lord will come for us before we die. It is important that we be diligent now in all we have been called to do in our service for the Lord. In verses 12, 13 and 15 Peter makes it plain that he wanted them to "remember" these fundamental truths. Some things we should forget but when it comes to divine truth and all that is associated with it, we need to be "stirred up" like a storm stirs up water, to remember "present truth."

As time passes in life and we become more aware of our limited time on earth, it is incumbent on those who have experienced life with the Lord for many years, to pass on to those younger in the faith, truths we have learned and practiced. For some, that will mean we must go right back to the beginning and reaffirm the fundamentals of the Gospel. To others we will need to pass on truths relating to the church and also the "House of God" - the local assembly. Still more will need to be mentored in view of the service to which the Lord has called them. Paul told Timothy to commit the things he had learned from Paul to "faithful men who would be able to teach others also."

The work of God in this age began with our Lord as the Chief Cornerstone from which the whole building takes its shape. Peter and other apostles and prophets were the foundation upon which the following generations of believers form the whole church structure. The church follows the design and shape they established. It was a complete entity then and it still is today. It is a complete body that is enlarging until the Lord comes. Consequently, now as then, the "sheep and the lambs," and all the parts of the body need the spiritual nourishment that comes from having the truth of God reaffirmed, recounted, revitalized by passing on the effects of truth practiced, and then received by those who hear it.

Books contain information from the study and thoughts of other people. Letters make things more personal than books and perhaps people are more inclined to read the letters. Face to face conversations have a powerful impact when truth is imparted. By watching a person's face one can tell whether interest is real, both on the part of the person passing on truth and the one receiving it. The scriptures are more like a personal letter to be read than a book only to be studied. As years advance like in the case of Peter, we become more conscious of the fact that I am perhaps hearing this person's voice for the last time. Last words do have a unique impact.

Like Peter, we should endeavor to leave things of importance behind us that will be a help, not a hindrance to others. What will people remember about us after we are gone? Will there just be sentimental comments or will there be words of faith and wisdom that can help strengthen the faith and testimony of the Lord's people?

### **GROUNDED IN TRUTH**

*We remember those who taught us, and the reasons for their care  
What they preached they practiced not only in the crowd, but when no one else was there  
The impression we received from them was that living for God is good  
No matter what situations arose, we knew where each one stood.*

*So now we are much older, the truths they taught still stand  
Established in the present truth, we can now live as our God planned  
It is our turn now to pass on to others the truths that we have learned  
By God's grace each truth taught well, will be through faith discerned.*

*As we travel farther down life's road, occasionally we look back,  
And trace the path the divine nature has led us, and nothing we did lack,  
Remembering the truth that grounded our faith, scripture we do apply  
On the promises of God even as heaven comes in view, on those we do rely.*

*"I thank Thee Father, for those who went before me and demonstrated the value of preaching, teaching and maintaining the practice of the word of God. Now it is my turn to do that for others. Help Thy servant to be faithful to the truth in every way. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*

## **2nd Peter 1:16-21**

### **GOD'S SPOKEN AND WRITTEN WORDS**

When we hear two different teachings about the same subject, how are we to discern which one is true? Often there will be illustrations or personal experiences told to lend authenticity to that which is being taught. This was happening in the days of the early church in ways similar to what we hear today. Some teachers came among the Lord's people to gain a following and supported their messages with "cunningly devised fables." Those ancient philosophies were based on a pantheistic view of life and they were supported by clever stories that were made up. In our day we have those who have made atheists out of billions of people based on evolutionary suppositions. There are also many pantheists who claim God is in everything and everything is God. Trees, animals, insects, people - anything that has some form of life is god. Most eastern religions have forms of these fables.

Where we live most people subscribe to the fable of evolution because it is taught in schools and has become part of the curriculum of humanistic education. New Age pantheism has become a religion to many and its "cunningly devised fables" have even influenced so-called church teaching in many denominations. There are even atheists who are in the position of clergy. Animals and their "rights" are considered similar to human rights. Names are given to house pets and they are considered "family members" with all the privileges and rights of children. This is a form of pantheism.

In writing this epistle Peter is directed by the Holy Spirit to go beyond these myths and mythical ideas, to affirming the truth in unmistakable ways. The "present truth" was experienced by him personally when he was one of three "eyewitnesses of His majesty." He had been an eyewitness of the sufferings of Christ as well as His power and glory. An eyewitness account of an event is taken as authentic in courts of law, an eyewitness testimony is considered reliable and factual. Truth does not need some far-fetched explanation such as a "Big Bang" or some other stretch of the imagination that teaches slime in a pond can become a frog, which can become a monkey, which can become a man. That is the silly speculation of someone's strange but active imagination.

Peter as an eyewitness saw the glory of the Lord and the power that which seemed to be normal humanity to visible brightness shining like the sun. He also heard the voice of the Father speaking to them about His Son. Peter heard that our Lord Jesus, who he followed is the One with "all power in heaven and earth" that He is coming again. He will come again personally and the "Majesty" he saw in the Lord for that brief time will someday be seen by every eye. The story-tellers of fables and myths were exposed as just being that.

The experience Peter had on that mountain where the Lord was transfigured before him, affirmed the deity of Christ. "This My Beloved Son." It affirmed the scriptures to be true. Moses the law-giver, was there. Elijah the prophet, was there. The law and the prophets were now joined by the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ. We can count on whatever is written in the scriptures can be counted on to be true. The kingdom of God was affirmed that after the suffering and death of our Lord Jesus, glory is to follow. Those who suffer for the Lord "passing through the waters," will experience the love and approval of Him with whom they will reign.

Now we also have "a more sure word of prophecy." The testimony of scripture written by the prophets and now the writers of the New Testament, has been given to us. This is of greater significance because it is not just the recounting of one particular event, but is the unfolding of God's thoughts to us. God's very words are passed on to us by holy men who wrote (spoke) as the Holy Spirit of God transmitted the breathing of God's mind and will to us through these written words.

The things those writers put down to be read by us are not their own opinions on any matter. The scripture is interpreted by taking the word of God in its context and reading it as a message from God - which it is! There is no contradiction when we read it as it is written. When we take it out of the context and use isolated verses to promote a personal idea, then it becomes a pretext. That is not the intention of studying the Bible. The Holy Spirit uses the scriptures to give us light regarding the "Day Star," our Lord Jesus Christ who will shine in all of His glory. Until then thoughts of His coming shines as the sun in our hearts as we wait. Because we love His appearing, we look for His appearing and that keeps the day star bright to us.

The scriptures of both the Old and New Testament were inspired by God as each writer was "borne along" by the Holy Spirit. These were not their own creative works or interpretations of oral traditions. The minds, culture, character and talents of each writer was maintained and used by the Holy Spirit to communicate what God wanted to say in a way suitable to the readers. There were not machines like computers or robots that were programmed to produce information. Rather they were "set apart" writers for the Originator and Interpreter of divine truth, The Holy Spirit. He knew the right people to use to pass on the breathings of God's heart and mind so that readers could sense He was speaking to them personally. When we read the Bible, we are getting eternal truths from the eternal God transmitted to us by people He chose. Those written words are as authoritative as the spoken words Peter heard on the Mount of Transfiguration.

### **AUTHENTICITY**

*When one has seen personally, evidence way beyond dispute  
And can support his words by daily conduct beyond repute  
And has a reliable faith that has taken deep root -  
Then what he has to say is truly authentic.*

*He heard the Lord speak publicly day after day  
The actions of the Lord gave weight to the words He did say  
Peter knew the Lord as the Truth, the Life and the Way -  
All the words that He spoke were authentic.*

*Peter was on the mountain with the Lord and two other men  
Elijah and Moses came there speaking of the cross to Him  
He saw the Lord transfigured in glory right before them -  
What he saw with his eyes was authentic.*

*Watching from a distance, Peter saw his Lord die  
He talked and ate with Him who from the grave did rise  
On Olivet he watched the Lord Jesus ascending into the sky -  
As an eyewitness his words are authentic.*

*Now an older man who for years had been faithfully serving his Lord  
Entrusted by the Spirit who had been out-breathing to him His word  
I read it now for myself, and the words are like a two-edged sword -  
What I am reading today is authentic.*

***"Father in heaven, these words of scripture are like a shining light in this dark world. I am watching the dawn through this window, and wait for the "Day Star" in the same way I am watching for the morning sun. Please help Thy servant to be authentic in everything I do this day. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."***

### **2nd Peter 2:1-3**

#### **DANGERS FROM FALSE TEACHERS**

In contrast to "holy men of God" were the "false prophets who were among the people" in the nation of Israel in Old Testament times. Some things and some people do not change. Claims and predictions were made by false prophets like Balaam who had ulterior motives similar to those of false teachers today. False teachers want to be popular and have personal gain which is most often financial. They have learned how to use words in a deceptive way so that their natural ability makes them socially acceptable and appealing to those who want a worldly lifestyle with popularity. Spiritual and godly living are not as important to false teachers as is the pursuit of satisfying the "lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes and the pride of life." False prophets preached peace when there was no peace because of the wickedness of men. False peace is taught by false teachers today who will not confront sin and will not warn their hearers of the consequences of sin. They want people to be comfortable and want everyone to be tolerant of others no matter how deviant their lifestyle may be. I saw an advertisement for "evangelistic meetings" that said the subject would be "The Good News about Hell!!" The teaching those who would have attended heard - "There is no Hell!"

Much of the false teaching now, as was true in the early church, is related to the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. Like the false prophets in the Old Testament times told the people only what they wanted to hear, so false teachers were undermining the deity of Christ on one hand and His humanity on the other. The importance of the birth, life, death and resurrection of Christ was belittled and His teaching was twisted to



suit the desire of the people. The teaching of the apostles as well was ignored, explained away and/or rejected. All of these teachings continue today and seem to be increasing as immoral living becomes increasingly rampant. Books, TV programs and seminars are being held that demean the fundamentals of the Bible and undermine basic Christian doctrine as taught by our Lord, the apostles and Bible-believing teachers.

Such people move in among the people of God as they seek to deceptively bring in destructive, sectarian and divisive doctrines in subtle ways. In playing upon words and using biblical terms in ways different from the biblical context, even some of God's people begin to question what they have been taught by faithful men. "Born again" is used by many to mean merely changing something used to an updated condition such as a house, car or even a doctrine, rather than a new nature begotten in a person by the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. Salvation, faith, inspiration and truth beside many other biblical words are given a slant by false teachers that is not at all consistent with what the Bible teaches.

Further dangers from false teachers comes not only with their "damnable heresies" or points of view, but they go further by denying the Lord who "bought" them. This word "bought" does not mean they are children of God, but that the death of Christ has paid the price for sin that was sufficient to meet the need of the whole world. It is "unto all" but only "upon all" who believe. The salvation of the soul is limited to those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ alone as the Savior of sinners. The results of such rejection of the Lord is condemnation now and eternal destruction that inevitably will follow.

False teachers can often be identified by the way they live and/or condone immoral practices that have become so common and accepted by modern society. It is easy for those who live sexually immoral lives to listen to and agree with those whose teaching does not condemn their lifestyle. Greed and a desire for money to be contributed to them is also a major motivation behind their teaching. Any money the people of God contribute to "Christian causes" should be to promote reliable ministries we know are biblical and beneficial to others, and the funds will be used in ways which we know God can use and bless. Those false teachers whose lifestyle, promotions and interests are inconsistent with the truth of God must be rejected, not supported.

There are usually evasive words used when a false teacher is asked for proof of their teaching from the scriptures. Evidence behind their claims of miracles are often not to be found. They can become upset, angry and offended when challenged to produce evidence for the results they claim as well as the source behind their teaching. A true teacher who ministers the word for our Lord Jesus Christ has nothing to hide. He will not be asking for financial support to be given to him. One who preaches the truth in love does not handle the word of God deceitfully. He will be open and honest and willing to answer the questions put to him by those who honestly want to know the source of his teaching, why he is doing it and how he is supported.

"Pernicious ways" lead to division and destruction. The "way of truth" is pure and brings delight to those who hear and obey it. We have to expect opposition to the way of truth and the teaching of the truth because it is contrary to that which appeals to the flesh and caters to moral depravity that is accepted today as normal. In fact, moral depravity in many places has been legislated as legal, and any who speak against it can be charged with breaking these new laws. The way of the ungodly and the way of truth cannot be mixed and cannot both be followed at the same time.

The dangers from false teachers comes from their covetous desire to generate money for themselves and for their own personal gain. Their feigned words are arguments used to exploit and turn aside the people of God. They suit their words to fit what people want to hear, and in that way conceal what should be revealed. They will use crafty, deceptive words presented in a skillful way mixed with scriptures references often out of context to get their point across. They will appear loving, friendly and authoritative, perhaps even uniquely wise, so they can carry out the dark interests of Satan without a sense of shame. Their smooth words will seem to be gracious, forgiving and convincing. At the same time, they seek to undermine the words of truth, faith and righteousness.

#### **SUBTLETY**

*Greed is not really unknown  
In fact, it is quite common to man  
"Do what you have to, to prosper -  
Get all you can get while you can!"  
Words like this clearly reveal  
What a person is like deep inside*

*When it seems like they have all the answers  
They usually have something to hide.*

*Words can be used in strange ways  
Often words used are crafty and deceptive  
Not everyone means what they say  
They are looking for the gullible to be receptive  
So, they appear to be loving and friendly  
In order to get subtle teaching across  
But when all is finally said and done  
Those they deceive will find out they are lost.*

*The lifestyle they promote is what's popular  
"After all," they say, "It is up to you -  
To determine what is important and meaningful  
It doesn't matter just what you will do -  
Because you are free to choose  
What you believe and how you will live -  
Don't worry about what the Bible teaches -  
Don't pay attention to warnings teachers will give."*

*"I am asking Father, for discernment and the wisdom to know how to respond to the subtle dangers of false teaching. My biggest concern is that I do not overlook the first signs of falsehood. Then I realize to teach the truth is a better solution than to merely condemn those who are false. Help Thy servant to speak the truth in love with authority. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen"*

## **2nd Peter 2:4-10**

### **DESTRUCTION AND DELIVERANCE**

The false teachers of whom Peter was warning the Lord's people were described by their teaching and their character. They denied redemption by the blood of Christ alone. They denied the fact that Christ is Lord. They twisted the word of God to suit their own teaching. In their character traits they were subtle, sarcastic about holy things and ridiculed those who represented the authority of God (dignitaries). They were covetous, looking for money and prestige. They could speak well and could please the people with their speeches. They were deceitful, lustful, seductive and promoted carnality. They mocked the creatorial work of God and denied the coming of the Lord. These people were a danger to the work of the Lord at the beginning of the church age, and the same kind of people are at work now. In the name of "christianity" they are doing the same today, and with the same results as those false teachers did in the past.

Peter gives three examples in the Old Testament of those who were destroyed because of their rejection of God's truth, and deliberate rejection of warnings given. The first are angels who fell because of the influence of Satan. Apparently, angels have a will of their own to choose to obey or disobey. They had been given the privilege of serving the Lord, but if they committed one sin, they were condemned without opportunity of changing their destiny. When angels sinned along with their leader, Lucifer, it consigned them to be reserved in chains. Sin that has affected the innocent who have suffered the consequences of subtlety and deception right from the garden of Eden until this day, bring the deepest punishment. These willful beings are reserved in the lowest hell until they, along with Satan and all who follow him, will be cast into the lake of fire.

How strange it is that those angels who dwelt in heaven, followed Satan down to hell. How strange it is that those people who have opportunity to "repent and believe the Gospel" are willing to follow Satan down to hell that was "prepared for the devil and his angels." They hear the plain preaching of the Gospel and are able to read for themselves the teaching of our Lord, and yet they accept the spurious teaching of self-seeking false teachers. The warning given by Peter in the example of fallen angels should make those who listen to teachers, consider not only the message they hear, but the character of the one who is speaking. If God will judge the angels that sin who are higher in the order of created beings than humans, then we can be sure He will not spare fallen, rebellious men from righteous justice being carried out against them.

The "old world" was not just the created earth but included the world of all created things including human beings. The wickedness of man grew as the population increased. Violence became common-place and lawlessness ruled. There were a few like Enoch, Methuselah and Noah who stood out in society because of

their faith in God. Enoch walked with God and preached the truth of God to the people. Noah was a preacher of righteousness as he heralded forth the word of God to the people for one hundred twenty years. The law of righteousness did not need the law of Moses to make it the guiding principle of life. The righteousness of God is revealed by faith. God is righteous and acts in righteousness. That standard is common to men whoever they are and wherever mankind is found. Those without a written law have the law written "in their hearts." All mankind is without excuse when it comes to right and wrong.

Even though Noah was faithful in warning the people, they didn't pay attention. They would have heard that God is righteous, that what He says will happen, that the promises He makes He keeps, that He is just and will "by no means clear the guilty." Noah believed God and prepared the ark "for the saving of his house." The testimony of Noah's preaching, of his building the ark and of his lifestyle were all given as a warning message to the world of ungodly sinners. But the pursuit of wickedness and all associated with it continued until the day he, his family and animals entered the ark. Destruction came after a long period of warning. Because the true teaching was ignored and people accepted the false, they all perished. God judges those who reject His truth and destruction is certain.

People have their own opinions today as to what God will or will not do. Some choose to reject the fact that hell and the lake of fire is real. They teach the grave and annihilation is the end of all unbelievers. Some will teach that because God is merciful, everyone will someday be in heaven. They say He would never send anyone to hell. History is repeating itself, and in our day the same false teaching that brought destruction in the past is being propagated and accepted by the majority of people as the truth. Payday is coming because whatever we sow, we reap.

The valley in which Sodom and Gomorrah were situated was apparently a very fertile place in the time of Abraham and Lot. Often in times of prosperity and leisure, sinful people want to try every pleasure whether it be forbidden or not. It is evidence of man's fallen nature that we want to challenge the boundaries established by God to see if the consequences we have been warned about will actually happen. The fate of Sodom and Gomorrah is clearly stated so there is no question as to why judgment fell on the people of those cities. Even Lot, the believer who compromised his faith to get ahead in the world, was distressed by the depraved, immoral conduct of the wicked people among whom he had chosen to live. Those who were warned of the consequences of sin were paid no heed.

Enoch prophesied, Noah preached and Abraham prayed - even messengers came from heaven, but the wickedness of man deafened them to the warnings. By defying God's law of nature as well as those who spoke the truth of God, and yet paid attention to that which was false, they sealed their doom. The efforts of the godly did not turn the ungodly from the course they were following, nor did it silence the false prophets. When there is no repentance toward God, there is no salvation for men. God acts in grace, but when grace and truth are spurned, righteous judgment consistent with the character of God, will definitely come.

At the same time judgment and destruction fell on the wicked, deliverance and safety was provided for the believers. Noah was preserved from the wickedness of the world around him by the truth of God which he proclaimed publicly. He and his family must have been isolated from society around them because of his preaching and the building of the ark. There was no hiding of his faith, and he and his remained consistent and clean in the midst of wickedness and corruption. The ark of safety lifted them above the waters of judgment, and kept them there when the flood covered the whole earth.

Lot had been blessed by his association with Abraham. He walked with Abraham and would have been privileged to work with him. The journey to Egypt may have given him a taste of the pleasures of the world and materialism. Believers who are just and righteous because of their standing in Christ, can become like the world when they persist in the pursuit of material gain and are influenced by the "religion" of materialism. Lot chose to live in Sodom even though he could have avoided being associated with the moral depravity of such a place. When we are surrounded by wickedness because of our own choosing, we are in danger of losing all that is valuable in our lives. Our reputation, our testimony as a believer, even our children are all at risk of being lost. In our day not everyone is able to avoid being surrounded by the moral pollution so prevalent in modern society. In such cases God knows how to "deliver the ungodly" when temptation and pressures arise against them. Lot was not a separated person, but even so was rescued "out of the fire." God knows how to preserve the ungodly until the day of judgment as well as how to preserve the godly when they are tempted. Fallen angels, the people of the world and the people of Sodom are given as examples of how God preserves in hell those who have rejected Him until the final judgment. Noah and Lot are examples of how God delivers those who believe in Him. Justice will prevail and justice will be done.

When people were victims of the flood or the fire, they had made a choice. God was just then and He is now. His righteousness will not be compromised and His fairness in dealing with both sinners and those he has saved is obvious. He is not like a crooked judge who can be manipulated by the sinful and willful opinions of men. Judgment hasn't fallen on the world today because God is "longsuffering and not willing that any should perish." We are living in days similar to the days of Noah and the days of Lot. The same practices are going on now that were happening then. It is important for people of faith to testify to the fact that judgment is coming, and that deliverance is here and available now. God is willing and ready to save. We may seem to be weak as far as the world is concerned, but our God is strong. He has the right to expect us to be faithful to Him and His word - and to be ready to rise to meet our Lord at any moment. After He comes for us and removes us from the world at the rapture of the church, "condemnation" (judgment) will fall again on this world.

#### **LEARN FROM THE PAST**

*One would think angels were immune from the temptation to sin  
They were created by God and were made to continually serve Him  
But satanic influence made them think they could be like God  
He deceived them like he did Eve with his subtle lying word -  
So now they're in chains reserved with the lake of fire ahead  
They like all who follow Satan, should personally and fearfully dread  
The consequences of sin which they brought on themselves  
That will confine all who reject God in the flames of hell.*

*The world perished in the days in which Noah preached  
Only his family was saved when creation's boundaries were breached  
Earth was polluted by man when lawlessness reigned  
Those safe in the ark were all that on earth remained.  
When truth is ignored, we have opened the door wide  
To those motivated by money who their true intentions hide  
They take advantage of many and constantly push their opinion  
Behind eloquent speech and charisma to influence your decisions.*

*Sodom and Gomorrah and all those in the plain  
Perished when just judgment in fire from heaven did rain  
Those notable places that catered to man's fallen nature  
Their wicked lifestyle their own children would capture  
To defy God's law of nature, and choose the base nature of man  
Instead of being righteous and following God's sovereign plan  
Is to reject what is right - and God, who made us in the image of Him  
On those righteous justice will fall, bringing the wages of sin.*

*"O Righteous God, my Father: I learn from Thy word, that even when wickedness abounds, grace is at work in saving those who put their faith in Thee. I thank Thee for the assurance that there are people Thou art saving today. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*

#### **2nd Peter 2:10-16**

##### **DESCRIPTION OF DECEIVERS**

A person with the heart of a shepherd knows that not only does truth have to be taught so the hearers understand what it means to be a Christian and live like one, but warnings have to be given as well as to dangers from false teachers and their doctrine. In an outreach Gospel effort, after the meeting ended and those who attended were urged to repent and put their trust in Christ alone, outside there were people who were waiting for the people to come outside so they could get them to sign a card. The people were told if they answered four questions and signed their name, they were saved. How deceptive and evil that was! It is not enough for us to be "positive" in our teaching and preaching. We also have to defend the faith against those who would make "easy believe-ism" out to be God's salvation. Any who add to or take away from the Gospel message are false teachers. We must be fair, honest and biblical when we preach the Gospel. People need to know what is scriptural and right, and also unscriptural and wrong.

The false teachers of Peter's day and our day as well, are not Christians. They are not true believers in our Lord Jesus Christ. They follow the corrupt actions of their sinful nature and adapt their teaching to suit man's

fallen nature. Pride, self-will, boldness, arrogance and outspoken challenges against leadership in churches and/or government marks their words coming from inflated egos. They are not respectful of, but rather question authority. Disrespect and daring words spoken against any who do not agree with them identifies them as false teachers. They mocked angels and men alike in those days. They are unafraid of speaking evil of dignitaries even though the angels do not do that. Angels leave judgment to the Lord.

In preaching and teaching the word of God we do not have the right to speak evil of others by name nor is it right to publicly speak against denominations by name. To state what others believe and teach, is not wrong because they do that themselves. False doctrine is exposed for what it is when the message of truth is given with scriptural backing because scripture is its own best defense. The truth when aptly taught is what clarifies a doctrine, not our condemnation of individuals. When Daniels and the other young captives refused to eat the food from the Babylonian king, they did so with a respectful attitude and a positive alternative that did not defy the authority of the government or the king's servant who was in charge.

This attitude of respect, dignity and integrity is contrasted with false teachers who are like animals without intelligence, motivated only by instinct instead of righteousness and truth. They make a big fuss about that which they do not understand and even blaspheme areas of true teaching which they resist. They can't tell the difference between truth and hearsay. They seek to destroy the faith of some not realizing it is they themselves who are going to be destroyed. They are corrupted by their own corruption. bribery and money motivate them so they can indulge themselves in riotous, shameless living at the expense of those who support them financially. Right out in the open of broad daylight they live a lavish lifestyle like they are intoxicated with pleasure, and they say they can "prove" from the Bible what they are doing is right. More difficult for those who profess to be "non-judgmental Christians" is they come into church gatherings and take the place of being a child of God. Defilement and disgrace to the name of the Lord is a result of their behavior and false teaching. They come to assembly gatherings to satisfy their own depraved nature and to get others to follow them.

Not only are they taking advantage of the believers in the church gatherings, but they look at the women there as a hunter looks for game to capture or kill. If they are listened to or even paid attention to, they not only sin themselves but cause others to sin. They exercise their greed by practicing ahead of time words and ways to get what they want. They are called "children of cursing" who despite their religious appearance are under the curse of God because of their sin.

These false teachers use words like "liberty," but it actually means "turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness." Their excuses are that they believe God's grace will overlook their sin, and "His mercy endureth forever," means there is no punishment for sin. People have been given the idea that they can do their own thing so they can feel "comfortable and fulfilled." Life lived as Christ intended is to false teachers and those who follow them, old-fashioned, not relevant to our day and is way out of date with "up-to-date" Christianity. There is "freedom" granted to those who are young to have things their way. The older folks can stay with their religious forms and habits. All of these ideas from false teachers appeal to those who are "unstable souls" and undermines their faith and commitment to the word of God. Spiritually immature people are more easily turned aside because the things of the world still have a certain appeal to them.

Lust to satisfy the appetites of the flesh is one characteristic of those Peter warned the saints about. Greed, the coveting of money was another. Balaam was an example of one who professed to speak for God and actually said some right things, but his motivation behind the words was money. These false teachers have developed schemes to get gullible people to give money to them. Those who live by faith and trust the Lord to meet their needs will not be "religious hucksters" who make sure people know they need more money. Some things may be legitimate, but to do a right thing in a wrong way doesn't make it right. A covetous person is never satisfied. When money becomes a person's idol, they have broken the law of God in the same way as they would if they lied or stole, took God's name in vain or broke any other commandment.

Just as Balaam would say what ever was expedient, whether it was right or wrong, for money, so do any who love "the wages of unrighteousness." Even an ass speaking the language of the false prophet did not stop his covetousness and the attitude of "madness." He thought he was being wise but he was really out of his mind. The only result of rebellion and covetousness is a form of madness that leads to tragedy. There is an abundance of false teachers asking God's people for financial support in these days. They may be talented speakers, but they are also slick talkers who can deceive people in order to get their money.

The people of God should commit themselves to support those projects that are consistent with the Great Commission we have received from our Lord. Those who carry out the word of the Lord can be trusted because they have been tested by the word of God. They will not try to deceive people and are willing to let

those who support them what they are doing with what has been given them. There are many faithful servants of our Lord in fellowship with Christians who gather in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, who are reaching out to the lost all over this world. They are committed to teaching the truth, making disciples, baptizing them and teaching them to practice what our Lord instructed. They will not become rich because of the gifts that have been sent and entrusted to them but will use what they have received in careful, wise ways to further the work to which they are committed.

### **TESTS**

*Not everyone does well in testing  
While sitting in a room at school  
Some just sit and seem to be dreaming  
Others intent on breaking the rules  
But there are tests we are taking  
That are of a far different kind  
Those tests our character is shaping  
These life-actions start deep in the mind.*

*So, when I hear people talk about God  
I listen to the tone of their voice  
When one quotes or reads God's word  
You can tell if they have made Him their choice  
A casual approach to God's truth  
Indicates they are not a person of faith  
Words spoken like that have no worth  
When one has never experienced God's grace.*

*Is one's life consistent with their speech?  
Or do they say one thing and do another?  
Is what they practice and preach  
Obviously godly like a child of our Father?  
Is the "liberty" they preach really true  
Or is it simply license to do one's own will?  
By the time their message is through  
Have you learned or are you in confusion still?*

*Biblical liberty sets us free from the bondage  
Of sin and self-will by God's grace  
A freed slave will give due homage  
To the One in whose freedom we're placed  
In this blessed freedom we are able to serve  
Our Deliver with "grace-bands" from our heart  
He gave us what we did not deserve  
Freedom in Christ has given life a new start.*

*"Father, this move is giving us a new perspective on our service for Thee. May every activity in which we are engaged be something that can glorify Thee and be a true representation of the blessings brought to us by Thy grace. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*

### **2nd Peter 2:17-22**

#### **WORDS OF FALSEHOOD**

The use of words is probably the most precise way of communicating we are able to use. Tone of voice, facial expressions, the use of our hands and our "body language" all pass on to others, how what we have to say or what we hear, affects us. The information we need is best passed on by words either spoken or written. The spoken words we hear can communicate passion or lack of it. The written words of the Bible are God's chosen way to teach us things He wants us to know and remember. His words are true, tried and precious when we read them and act upon that which we learn from them. "Thy words were found and I did eat them, and they became unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." "A word fitly spoken is like apples of

gold in pitchers of silver." The response of faith to the word of God brings warmth and joy to our soul; guidance and common sense to the activities of our lives; instruction from the past and hope for the future.

Then there are the deceptive, eloquent, contemporary words of false teachers that promise much and produce little. With an excellent vocabulary, well researched phrases designed to impress listeners with their knowledge, and an appealing presentation, false teachers overcome the minds and reason of people with their ardor and impetuosity. However, when they have concluded their moving dissertation, and the applause is over, and a listener is asked, "Exactly what did he say?", there is a blank look and fumbling for words with which to reply. These are like springs with no refreshing water to satisfy the seeking soul who is thirsting for God. How great a contrast is the words of our Lord Jesus when He said, "The water that I shall give is a well of water springing up into everlasting life." The Savior spoke plain words that could be understood by a soul in need.

False teachers talk about "liberty and freedom" from the doctrinal and moral restraints taught in Bible-believing churches who teach the word of God. They throw out challenges to defy those who "Tell you what to do," just because it comes from the Bible. Some who listen to what Bible teachers say and comment something like, "I tried that and it didn't work for me." Or "I used to believe that stuff I was brought up under, but now I am free to do what I want and believe what I want." A spring without water refreshes no one. An empty cloud that is blown with the wind but drops no rain is a disappointment because it gives only a false hope as it passes overhead. Great swelling words that have no substance are a disappointment. "Words of vanity" are empty words designed to impress people with the intellectual expertise of the speaker, but have value nor substance and cannot meet the spiritual needs of the listeners.

The gloomy "mists of darkness" is where those who falsely teach immature hearers the way to a "new revelation" of light. Those who give heed to their "great swelling words" will be lost forever. "Hell is Darkness, deep and Awful," even though the words of falsehood will deny the existence of, and truth of hell and the lake of fire being ahead of those who are without Christ. Those who preach such things will often claim to get "further revelations" and will adapt some new idea to what they have already taught. The fog of confusion "blinds the minds of them that believe not" as Satan uses these false teachers to keep people from putting their faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Those who present false doctrines are often very eloquent speakers who use Bible terms and religious oratory to impress people. Unusual words linked with modern "buzz words" give the impression that the false teachers are up-to-date and are so unlike the "old fogies" who use archaic Bible terms, verses and illustrations. Most people do not know the Bible well enough to "try the spirits" (test the teaching) and determine if the words spoken and propaganda written are consistent with biblical Christianity. Consequently, people by the millions are settling for pseudo-Christianity based on strange doctrines that may even lead them to clean up their lives and conform to what is socially accepted as okay. They have not been "transformed by the renewing of your minds, that they might know the good and perfect and acceptable will of God."

Manipulation of the minds of people by the "servants of corruption" can turn people into the bondage and corruption of sin rather than the freedom that comes from God. The success of falsehood depends on the eloquence and charisma of speakers who appeal to the old nature that lusts after sin. There is a battle for the minds of people going on all the time. The forces of falsehood are controlled by the god of this world who "blinds the minds of the that believe not." One who speaks for God will not tell people they are "basically good" and God needs them in His family. He loves them it is true because He is the Creator but does not tell them they are His children because they are human, and so they should start living better to please Him. A true preacher and teacher will tell people plainly that they are sinners in need of a Savior. He will tell them plainly of the consequences of sin. He will make sure they know the holy God will punish sin and will not have those who love and live in sin in heaven. In a loving way a true teacher and preacher will explain the need of a sinner, the need and way of repentance toward God and why the death of Christ alone is the acceptable remedy for sin. There is no forgiveness with God until sin has been faced and dealt with. The sacrifice of Christ alone is the only way sin can be paid for.

Communication and manipulation are very different. To communicate faith means one passes on to another truth that can be expressed. To express truth, is to speak in a way that is easily understood, and to give a basis on which convictions can be built. The false teachers appeal to immature people who do not understand spiritual things, and offer false freedom, based on false promises that create false hope. A "promise " of liberty by a person who is in bondage themselves places both speaker and hearer in the condition of slavery to sin. One in bondage to the sin of covetousness for money, easily falls for the false teaching of the "prosperity gospel." One can be in bondage to sexual sins in the mind, on the internet, in

books and movies, or even want to carry out their fantasies. False teachers often do the same and they say, "That is only normal. Everyone does it and it is not against the law." Pride of place, face or race as well as the desire for fame is bondage that entangles people, and ends much worse than it began. Sin may promise freedom but it produces the iron bands of bondage in life and bondage in death - and for eternity. People can become captives even to their own habits, dreams and ideas.

Real freedom is when we are free to be the best we can in life and be with Christ forever. To be able to do the will of God from the heart is true freedom in life. When we are able to "glorify God in our body and spirit which is His," this has the potential of true freedom. To know and do the truth makes us free. It is truly liberating when we have the God-given power to live by faith, grow in grace and do God's will. The more we experience this in life, the more freedom we enjoy. The counterfeit reforms that false teaching promotes when there is no repentance toward God nor faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, leads to more sin and greater condemnation. One who knows and love God more and more overcomes the desire to disobey God.

When people know what is right and turn away from it, that religious experience to "freedom" will end up worse than that which they had at the first. Like a dog that feels bad inside and vomits, and then turns and eats it again, so those who have no spiritual new birth will not really change in themselves nor what they feed on. Like a pig that has been cleaned up on the outside, until the nature is changed by the Spirit of God, those who "clean up their act" will go back again to the mud. The nature is still the same even though the lifestyle may be cleaned the spiritual strength to please God is not there. A person may feel better or more "comfortable" like a dog; or look better like a clean pig, more "holy", but without being born again by the Spirit through the word, he or she is still the same as before. That person may have been told, "You are saved!" but imagine their disappointment and shame when they face the fact, they are the same and maybe worse than before. Freedom in Christ comes from within and is not false freedom. A child of God has been made a partaker of the divine nature and has power over sin. Sin not longer "has dominion" over that person. Just because one says they are saved doesn't make it true. God saves us. We are born again by the Spirit of God. We are joined to Christ.

**2Peter 2:21.** *"For it has been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them."*

#### **DANGEROUS MEN.**

*There is nothing new about this; this kind have been around for a long time.*

*Suggesting – questioning – undermining – challenging God and His Word.*

*This started with the devil in the perfect conditions of Eden.*

*Heretics – self-opinionated in their arrogance – sneaking in as teachers of truth.*

*Lascivious – covetous – presumptuous; unjust – unkind – unclean*

*Corrupt – contemptuous – callous – condemning – careless – calculating.*

*There is nothing good about this; it ruined the Garden of Eden –*

*It ruined the whole human race – sin's wages are real – death passed upon all men.*

*Enoch warned – testified - spoke about the Lord's coming – he lived – others died.*

*Men who knew the way, brought ruin on the earth in Noah's day.*

*Judgment fell because of dangerous men who knew better – didn't listen to Noah*

*They heard the words of salvation – ignored – chose to be ignorant still.*

*Abraham lived a separated life – lived a stranger's life as light in the world.*

*Others? Lived ungodly – an example to those who chose the wrong way.*

*Filthy in their minds – filthy in their words – polluting morally all they come across.*

*Unclean in their actions – despisers of those in authority – self-centered to the extreme.*

*Opposers of things they know nothing about – challenging – dividing – deceptive.*

*Not satisfied until you are unsatisfied – not quitting till disaster strikes.*

*Apostate in their unbelief – enjoying what is evil – minds blinded to the truth.*

*Shifting about in posture – shifting eyes moving side to side – not willing to stop.*

*Words that sound good – ideas galore – promises that are impossible.*

*Not stopping to consider – day after day agitating – questions without answers.*

*Answers without questions – promising freedom not knowing what it is.*

*Wanting others to wallow in filth – wanting others to be in vomit themselves.*



## AVOID THESE DANGEROUS MEN AT ALL COST TO YOURSELF!

*"O Holy God: the dangers are always near us but often we miss the signs. Give me enough insight to discern potential evil in events and people. Keep me from seeing evil behind every bush. Do not let me become paranoid over every little glitch that might appear in my view. I must anoint my eyes with the heavenly eye-salve. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*

### **2nd Peter 3:1-5**

#### **PURE MINDS**

It is evidence of a true shepherd of God's people that he knows who they are and where they are in their spiritual life and development. He genuinely cares for them and is not afraid to let them know it. When in the first of four "beloved" statements in chapter three Peter writes, "Beloved --- be mindful," he knows there is a battle for the minds of young and old believers alike. He had assured them of who they are in the eyes of God at the beginning of the letter. They have been called and chosen by the Lord. He had warned them of those who were among the people of God who are not what they claimed to be, teachers of the Christian lifestyle, but are rather false teachers in the same category of Old Testament false prophets. Now in chapter three, as a faithful shepherd should, he is giving more instruction in view of where they are living in the historical context of God's dealings with mankind and what is coming in the future.

"Pure minds" are not mixed up by vain speculation of vain men, but are sincere and wholesome, without the flaws and cracks in the character of opinionated people. Peter let those early saints know his opinion of them as well as his expectation of them. In contrast to the subtle but eloquent words of false prophets are the "words spoken by holy prophets." Also, the "commandments given by the apostles" were equally inspired words "God breathed" by the Holy Spirit of God. The people of God are as important to us today as they were to Peter. The Lord's people are beloved by God and by those who "love the brethren." One who truly cares for them, wants to not only protect them from deceivers, but to see them mature and act in faith based on the word of God.

Many of the prophecies Old testament prophets made were fulfilled during the time our Lord was here. Those predictions were made hundreds of years before they were fulfilled just as the prophets said. That authenticated the fact that it was God speaking through them. Those men were not false prophets. The commands of the apostles are also stated as ways God's truth is transmitted to His people. Both the prophets and apostles had the right to speak with knowledge and authority as those through whom God speaks to us. In fact, there are a number of references to the word of God in this chapter to confirm what the people of God believe, compared to the spurious opinions of the false teachers who were among them.

The first reference to the word of God is that it is an "epistle." It is a personal communication from God to them along with the first letter they had received. They had a personal, written message from God. The "spoken" words of the prophets to God's people were from "holy men of old" who were moved by the Holy Spirit to write the words. "The commandments" from the apostles who were in the foundation of the church, were divinely given instructions to men who had been selected by the Lord to take His word to the world as were those who followed their commands. "His promise" regarding the coming of the Lord and events in the future, is also the word of God. What a different promise this is compared to the promise of "liberty" the false teachers gave. "The word of God" created the world and the heavens before there were apostles and prophets. Creation hadn't even started when God spoke things into existence by His word. It is the same word of God that brought about the flood and renewed the earth afterward. The writings of Paul are mentioned and they too are the word of God, both equal to and supportive of all other words of scripture.

"Last days" is a reference to the period of time between the incarnation of Christ and the glorious appearing of our Lord when He comes in "power and glory." Those who scoffed were denying the truths taught by the prophets and apostles - and even the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ. Peter had explained the unity between the writers of scripture, contrasted with those arrogant teachers who with cynicism promoted themselves. The prophets, the Lord and the apostles all warned about those coming who were false prophets and teachers. They warned there would be an increase in their number in the last of the "last days." They gave descriptions of their lifestyle and license, and their mockery of God through His writers. Their mockery and open opposition had been predicted and Peter was adding his words of warning to those who had gone before him.

Last days mockers and false teachers mocked the Lord then and now. "He" promised to return and it hasn't happened they would say with disdain. They are deliberately limited in their wicked minds to what they see,

what they think, their own timetable of events and their own opinions. Not only do mockers say you can't rely on what the Lord Jesus promised, but because nothing has changed in creation since it began, nothing will change. Some teach today that the evolutionary process is still going on but so slowly it cannot be observed. Others who believe the theory of uniformitarianism believe nothing is changing and never will. In all of the areas of study people seem to believe people and things are getting better and better with only a few minor setbacks. Those who the mockers called "fathers" may refer to those in the generation before them who passed away or the ancestors from the beginning of man's history. Typically, people today say, "If I can't see it, I won't believe it." By choice they reject the prophetic warnings the prophets, the Lord and the apostles gave relating to political, religious and natural disorder.

When people deliberately close their minds to the truth and their eyes to events happening around them in the world, we know that under whatever cloak they are wearing: religious, business, friendliness, education - that person is not to be trusted. They want proof of the Lord's coming but close their eyes to prophetic facts. They are blinded by their own choice to be blind. Such persons doubt God's word and deny His promises to come again and claim they are unreliable. They assume because things seem to be the same as they were awhile ago that nothing fundamental is going to change. They willingly close their minds to the word of God and so remain ignorant of the facts. There have been great changes and there will be again. Since human history began the earth has been cursed because of man's sin so that not only good fruit is in the earth but also useless plants. If that useless plant life is left out of control it hinders the good. There has been a world-wide flood that has changed the topography of the earth as well as changing the climate on earth.

Peter's simple easily understood statement quotes the facts as they can be seen. He did not go into complicated scientific explanations as to how things came to be. By faith we accept the truth of what he wrote and understand the value of the scriptures making things plain to us who have faith in the written word of God. When we trust the light of God's word that shines on a matter giving us understanding, we can assume those of pure minds will believe the fulfilled prophecies of the past to be true. When we understand the character of those who mock; when we know the day of Christ relates to the rapture, the day of the Lord is when Christ returns to earth and the day of God is the glorious future; then we can quietly rest in faith, labor with enthusiasm and wait for Him with patience.

**2Peter 3:1.** *"This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance."*

### **BELOVED, BE...**

*BELOVED, listen and be mindful to these words –*

*For no matter what men say,  
The days in which we live right now,  
Will surely pass away.*

*The scoffers talk, and the mockers mock,  
Each trying to out-do the other.  
But the prophets and apostles taught  
Of the coming of the Savior.*

*BELOVED, be not ignorant as the years pass by,  
Because He's not yet come.  
He's been held back, but is not slack –  
He's waiting to save some.*

*But when He comes and we are gone –  
Then, world, you'd best learn now,  
That all will burn that's polluted here –  
The heavens and earth starts anew.*

*BELOVED, be diligent – look ahead.  
Live in peace and without blame.  
Our Lord has left us here on earth,  
And given authority by His name.*

*To the mockers and the scoffers,*

*And when we see the world's events –  
Then teach the Word of God out clear;  
It is for this reason we are sent.*

*BELLOVED, beware: because in each one of us,  
Is a susceptibility to sin.  
Be careful you're not led astray –  
We are not yet at journey's end.*

*But grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord –  
Be sure you're not in darkness but in light.  
Give all glory to the Lord,  
All lasting honor is His right.*

*"Thanks O Father, for not leaving us without warnings of the end times. I can see evidence all around of the changing of the times and increasing of the darkness. I am arming myself from day to day, to be ready to act on Thy direction, even though the end draws near. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*

## **2nd Peter 3:5-10**

### **GOD DOESN'T DELAY - HE WAITS**

New believers in Christ during our day as well as when Peter wrote this letter, are subjected to the opinions of those who deliberately reject historical and physical evidence of God and His promises. Two events that were observable are used by Peter to prove that the false teachers were wrong in their teaching. They were saying that everything was the same as at the beginning and there was no reason to believe Christ was coming again. Creation and the flood are evidence of divine intervention in the unfolding of the ages. After the first day of creation, water surrounded the earth and the water on the earth was confined into oceans or under the crust of the earth's surface. In that position they stayed until the flood came in Noah's day when the waters above the earth and in the earth came together again.

The ordered system (cosmos) "overflowed" and became the cataclysm that destroyed the whole world system including human beings, except for those in the ark. The world was not annihilated but the world "perished" as in being devastated as to its past, and transformed as to its new condition. The fossil record is used by scientists, philosophers and liberal theologians to "prove" their theories while they refuse to consider proven data. Both hardened sediment (rocks) and unhardened sediment cover most of the earth. Fossils contained in this hardened sediment is a record of the flood, not of evolution.

God's word brought the world into existence. God's word brought the destruction of the wicked works of men by the flood. God's word will in the future bring destruction by fire on this groaning creation that has been polluted and exploited in wasteful abandon. There is enough atomic energy in a glass of water to power and ocean-going vessel. In His own time God will "hit the switch" to burn up the old creation and the works of sinful mankind. God has intervened in the past and will do it again in the future. All of the opinions of men mean nothing when they are contrary to the plans of God. He will do what needs to be done in the cleansing fire of righteous judgment.

The scoffer's argument was why has the coming of the Lord not happened? Why the delay in bringing about the consummation of all things? It is hard for us to even consider an "eternal now." No beginning, no middle, no end - defies an explanation or description we can put into words. God lives in a timeless state. Measuring time is only relative with God. It is like one grain of sand on a beach. God stands above time. Peter does not say that a thousand years means one day. God waits patiently, because He has an objective He wants to see take place. Human beings get impatient because we live in a time frame.

Scoffers of all ages recognize that there has been divine intervention in the past. That is what the flood - divine intervention. Scoffers don't understand the reason for the delay of a holy God is in control of things and events. Christ has not returned, so the scoffers say He won't. Believers know that God keeps His promises and our Lord will return. We all need to remember God is waiting patiently for other people to come to repentance. God works in time and is not limited in any way by the constraints of time. He is not unable to act nor is He unwilling to act. He is right on His schedule and for His own reasons doesn't take counsel from men as to when He should take action.

How gracious it is of God to suffer the scoffers to continue their rant against Him. He is waiting even for them to have a "change of mind" - repent toward God and put their faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. The lost must "come" - make room for repentance that is genuine - and accept what God's word says with humility and faith. Each person must make room for the gift of salvation by repentance and faith in Christ.

There is no question "the day of the Lord" will come. It is a promise. History has proved that God has acted in the past, and we must accept the promise that He will keep His promise in the future. He will come as "a thief in the night." Suddenly and unexpectedly that which He has promised will happen. There will be no warning. A false sense of security makes people complacent regarding sin, punishment for sin and coming judgment.

Coming judgment should motivate the Lord's people to be actively involved in seeking the lost and being conscious of the state of their own souls. It is possible for believers to become so complacent about the Lord's return that we look at the world and events without a sense of urgency. The lost need to be saved. When God brings judgment in the earth, the fire stored within the heavens and earth will be released by God, not men who have a button to push. God will do His own judging work. He will not let a president, prime minister or world ruler do what He reserves for Himself.

The chemical energy contained in the elements will be released into heat, light and sound, and everything will be laid bare. Cities, buildings, memorials, inventions and all that mankind boasts of will be totally destroyed. People will stand before God with nothing to boast of or claim as their right to be in His eternal kingdom. One who is "born of God" enters God's kingdom because of who he or she is, not because of what they have done to earn a place there. God is waiting; longsuffering - but He will not wait forever.

#### **WAITING**

*"Why has He not come, what's the delay?"  
That is what we hear scoffers often say  
They don't realize the difference between delay and wait  
The one is motivated by love, the other by hate.  
God does not panic, everything is under control  
He waits because He loves each and every soul  
So, in spite of the mockery, scoffing and scorn  
He's waiting for the last one in the church to be born.*

*Then without warning, our Lord Jesus will come  
Every believer by Him will be called home  
No time to prepare when the shout is given  
Right now, is the time to prepare for heaven.  
God does not need to give an explanation  
He has provided a free, full salvation  
It is a gift paid in full by the Savior's death  
He expects us to act on what the word of God saith.*

*How gracious of Him to wait all this long  
God's expectation is for sinners to face what is wrong  
And turn in repentance to do what is right  
Then they will know the difference between darkness and light  
Afterwards will rapidly unfold prophetic fulfillment  
Justice will prevail according to God's commandment  
God's children should be holy in work and in walk,  
As we wait for the conclusion of God's prophetic clock,*

*"Holy Father, in the light of current events, the character of the age and the complacency of Christendom. I am challenged in my soul to be committed faithfully to Thy word, Thy people and the claims of the Gospel. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*

**2nd Peter 3:11-18**

#### **DILIGENCE IN LIFE AND SERVICE**

When we know what is going to happen in the future, people are motivated to concentrate on what is important. Warnings given about an approaching storm, a potential earthquake or a tsunami with potential of causing a great disaster, make wise people pay attention and take steps for reaching safety themselves and those around them. Such a warning supersedes all other things in which we are engaged. In view of the temporary nature of even the material universe that is around us which will all be destroyed; our way of life should be holy and the things in which we are involved should be done in a way that is consistent with the mind of God. He is patiently waiting for the last of the elect to come to repentance. We should be different enough from ungodly people that they are attracted to our Savior.

The expectation of our Lord's return motivates us to be different in conduct and also in our witness for the Lord. The urgency of the matter stirs us to "hasten the coming" by earnestly seeking the lost with the Gospel. Expectancy can be contagious and when God's people are living as strangers and pilgrims in eager anticipation (looking) for our Lord, then those with whom we come in contact may also look beyond today. It is important for us to remember that we can make a difference and at the same time not think that God cannot take action without us. We are commissioned to call people to repent and believe the Gospel. If we are actively engaged in this work, we will not be ashamed when He comes.

In the atmosphere there are a number of "elements" that we cannot see which are contained, and will be loosed. Oxygen, hydrogen, and nitrogen when they are unloosed can be devastating in their effect. The development of hydrogen and nitrogen bombs has concerned the whole world. If they are unloosed, elements melt. God does not "uncreate" what He created, but the process of disintegration of matter will be speeded up to cleanse and renew that which has been polluted by man. What He has promised will be fulfilled. Of that we can be sure. He has promised to return and the work of dealing with the effects of sin, and the fullness of redemption that makes possible a new heavens and earth will be completed. Righteousness will prevail and will remain forever.

At the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, we will meet Him "in peace" if in diligence we are watching for Him, living as we should and involved in that which will not make us ashamed. Those who respond to false teachers and their doctrine will have "spots and blemishes" passed on to them from those apostates. When we are expecting our Lord, we will be separated from those people, and will be "found of Him in peace." Six times Peter used the word "beloved" to testify of the deep concern of His shepherd heart.

The Lord's patience is why people are still being saved in spite of the wickedness of this age. The offer of salvation still stands because He is "not willing that any should perish." Paul's writing and Peter's writing were not at odds with each other. Paul was concerned with making sure that salvation by grace alone was clearly understood. Peter emphasized the life and service of believers. These are not contradictory but complimentary teachings. It is the same today when some people "study" the Bible. They think the "law" contradicts "grace." Some teach that the church is an extension of Israel, and others say that faith and works condemn each other. This is what is meant when they "wrest" the scriptures to say what they think rather than what God says.

The scriptures must be accepted for what they are, the word of God, and as they are written, not by what we think. Paul's writing was accepted even in Peter's day on the same level as other scriptures that were accepted as "inspired by God." To twist what is written to suit one's opinion leads to the "destruction" (damnation) of that person. Rejection of eternal life as it is presented in the scriptures results in eternal death. The false doctrines being taught by many today have infiltrated into churches that once held to the truth of God. When we follow the word of God, we testify to the saving grace of our Lord. Consequently, we commit ourselves to live holy and godly lives and to resist the false teachers and their teaching.

Those to whom Peter was addressing this letter were not the untaught or unlearned, but lest they be caught up in "the error of the wicked," he tells them to "beware" of what could happen. Warnings are given to believers to be separated from the error of those who are lawless and without restraint. Those who are "wicked" speak against those in authority who teach and practice the word of God. They promise a freedom to the immature believers that is simply lawlessness. The way to be preserved from falling from the steadfastness that characterizes people of faith is to be established in the truth of God.

Commitment on the part of believers to the doctrines taught in the Bible, enables us to "grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." It is by grace we are saved, by grace we have spiritual strength and by grace we endure suffering. Grace enables to praise the Lord when we find life difficult. It gives us the wisdom to give what is appropriate when it is the Lord's will to give. God's Himself gives grace to the humble and to those who ask for grace to help in time of need. Growing in grace often occurs when we are going through times of great need and are not able in ourselves to meet that need.

Growing in knowledge does not just mean we are good students of the scriptures. The knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ indicates we have come to know Him better personally and can understand what He means when we read His written word. A believer is a whole person when he or she is born again. We do not add bits and pieces onto what we are in Christ. Rather we grow as when one develops from the inside as we mature in grace and knowledge. There is a spiritual balance that is nurtured by the fellowship we have in a local assembly of God's people. The checks and balances of fellowship with others, helps keep a balance in our personal life.

It is important that growing both in grace and knowledge is kept active in our lives. In the epistle of 1st Peter, "grace" is emphasized by being spoken of eight times. In 2nd Peter the emphasis is on "knowledge that is mentioned six times. Growth in doctrine and practice keeps the appropriate balance in our lives so we can bring glory to our Lord in life now as well as in the future. It is imperative that we keep separated from the error that is taught by false teachers and the sin that accompanies their false teaching. Those who have compromised the truth of God are busy and can be found almost everywhere we go. The message of the Gospel demands our commitment in these days of emergency. It is urgent that we guard the truth we are called to proclaim. When we grow in grace and knowledge, we will glorify our Lord, seek to win the lost and strengthen the Lord's people.

### **CONTAGIOUS EXPECTANCY**

*"When is He coming, will He be here soon?"*

*Are words from a child in a waiting room  
Anticipating the arrival of a loved One to come  
And together the family will be able to go home.*

*The others will quietly put down their book,  
When the child speaks - and they too will look,  
At the clock and out the window hoping to see  
Their loved One who's coming with expectancy.*

*A promise can be counted on when you know the Person  
If the waiting time seems long, there is a reason  
For the One waited for with expectancy to appear  
All we know is His coming is very near.*

*Those in trouble or in pain live daily in the hope  
That at His coming all they have endured will stop  
Expectancy for His coming is very contagious  
When we talk together of the One who has saved us.*

*In spite of all that we see happening around  
Let us all with expectancy of seeing Him be found  
My attitude and actions can affect other's lives  
So that with joy we will meet Him when He arrives.*

*"Father in heaven, it would be a wonderful day if this is when He returns. Whatever service is best for me in which to be engaged this day, may Thy servant give to each task the full commitment it deserves. May I be able to pass on to the Lord's people I meet, some "contagious expectancy." When I speak to the young people tonight, please fill Thy servant with simple words of truth to give light to their souls. May they and their families know why they should repent and come to Christ and how to avail themselves of Thy great gift of eternal life. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*