Okay, we’re ready to get started and take up where we left off in our last program, which will be in I Peter chapter 4. We want to constantly be reminded that these little epistles of James, Peter, John, Jude and on into Revelation were all part and parcel of the Old Testament prophetic program laid out for the Nation of Israel. A good example of that is Psalms chapter 2. And, consequently, it is addressed to Jews.

Now go back with me for just a second so you can pick up what I’m talking about. Go back to James chapter 1 verse 1, because we just never want to lose sight of the fact that you must always look at the Scriptures in light of this; to whom was it written? Who’s writing it? When was it written? And what were the circumstances? Then you can begin to understand. All right, now in James verse 1 of chapter 1, it is so obvious who the first of these little Jewish epistles were written to. Now remember, this is not the James that was part of the Twelve disciples but, rather, this is the half-brother. James of the Twelve was beheaded earlier.

"James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, (written) to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting." Well there are no Gentiles in the Twelve Tribes of Israel, so James is writing to the Jews.

Well, you come to I Peter chapter 1 and, even though he doesn’t mention the Twelve Tribes, he’s writing to Jews, but he calls them "those who are scattered," as James does. Well, that wouldn’t apply to Gentiles, they’re not scattered - but Jews were. They were driven out of Jerusalem because of Saul of Tarsus’ persecution, and they’ve been scattered throughout that part of the Middle East and on up into Asia Minor - what’s present day Turkey. And, in fact, that’s the area I think that James and Peter and even John (to the most degree), are writing. They wrote to little Jewish congregations up there in Asia Minor.

In fact, in my own mind I think the Jewish congregations that James and Peter and John are writing to are the same congregations addressed in the first three chapters of
Revelation. In other words, those, too, are Jewish churches, and we’ll see that when we get back there in a few months because there’s no Church language in there. There’s no Church language in James. There’s no Church language in Peter. There’s no Church language in I, II or III John. Not a word. **It’s all addressed to Jewish believers who had, no doubt, been scattered out of that church in Jerusalem, back in Acts 8:1.** So, when you keep that in mind, all these things just fall in place and become so easy to understand.

In fact, I’ve learned a lot in the last few months preparing for these TV programs - things that I never saw before. And I’m sure everyone that hears me teach this is going to say the same thing. All right, but now in I Peter chapter 4 (writing to these Jews probably up there in Western Turkey and Asia Minor in separate little Jewish congregations), they’re under intense pressure. The rest of the Jewish world has pretty much made life easy with the Romans - but these believers who are now living a life that is according to God’s program, are being persecuted. And it’s always been that way. You go back into the Old Testament.

Go all the way back into Israel’s history - how did even the mainstream of Israel treat the true believing Jew? They persecuted them constantly. What did they do with the prophets? Killed them. **And that’s just been part and parcel of the human history; that the true believers of any age are hated by the majority of the human race.** So these Jews here now, in these little epistles are under intense pressure. Not only from the Romans but probably also from the more lackadaisical Jews who are religious but not godly.

The thrust of these letters is to give them the wherewithal to resist the tribulational persecution they’re under. No they’re not in the Tribulation, as Peter is writing this, but remember according to the Old Testament program (and by the time we get into these little Jewish epistles), they feel like the Tribulation is right out in front of them. And all they’re seeing is the stage being set for the Tribulation, as I call it, **even today.**

Now, as I pointed out when we started all these little epistles, this was back in the first century between 40 and 70 AD. But now here we are in 2003 and we’re almost in the same identical scenario. Oh, a different world technologically and socially but, humanly speaking, nothing has changed. **The only thing that is different, is God has now given the Gentile world through the Apostle Paul’s teaching of Grace nearly 2,000 years to complete the Body of Christ.** And I think we’re getting close to that completion.

Mankind is still the same. They still practice the same wickedness. True believers are still under the same kind of pressure. The political systems haven’t changed. In fact,
we just thought of something the other night, and I’m going to turn right around and share it with our whole television audience. Isn’t it amazing that God did not let Rome destroy the Temple and Jerusalem, and scatter the Nation of Israel, until Paul had finished his epistles? So the stage was set, that they would no longer need the central Jewish element because, as Peter writes, they’re scattered. And because Paul’s epistles are now complete, everything is ready to send the Gospel of Grace to the ends of the earth, which has been going now for almost 2,000 years.

So it’s amazing that those two things were pretty much in proximity - probably a year and a half or two between. Now the next big amazing thing is that, just about the time that Israel started reappearing as a nation (and coming back into the Promised Land back in 1946, and finally culminating with their independence in 1948), almost at the same time we have the Roman Empire also reappearing in the area of Western Europe. So Israel and the Roman Empire went down into the dustbin of history together. They were dormant for almost 2,000 years together - and now they have reappeared together. Isn’t that amazing?

When we were down in Florida, we were out fishing in the Gulf. And one day, there was a pair of dolphins, a mother and its baby, and I couldn’t help but think of it. All afternoon they were just going up and down side-by-side. You’d think they were glued together. And then they told us, "No, that’s the baby." Well, you know I couldn’t help but think of that when I pictured this, this is exactly what happened with Rome and Israel.

They went down into the dustbin of history about the same time. Two thousand years later, they come back up into view almost the same time. Well, that should make an imprint on your thinking shouldn’t it? That, as Israel reappeared, so did the Roman Empire reappear - because, after all, we know that Daniel told us in chapter 9 that the empire that would destroy the city and the sanctuary (which was Rome), would also be the empire out of which this man of sin (the Anti-christ) would come.

So, we know that there has to be a semblance of the Old Roman Empire. Well, that began of course, right after World War II. First they called it the Club of Rome, ten nations. Then for the longest time they just called themselves The Ten. And now we know them as the European Union. The ‘EU’. But it’s a Revived Roman Empire and it’s coming more and more to the fore as I mentioned in my last newsletter. Just watch Western Europe because, as Israel comes more to the fore, right beside it comes the Roman Empire - because they will be operating in unison again by the time the Tribulation starts.
So, we’ve got two scenarios. They thought it was all coming as it was being written - it was just right out in front of them. They didn’t know that God was going to stop His time clock and not permit the Tribulation to come in, and instead offer grace for 2,000 years. But now we see that those same elements of what we see here are back in view - and so there’s going to be a group of Jews that will play the role that these Jews were playing (and that is being prepared to go into the horrors of the Tribulation). You’ll see it more and more as we come along.

_I Peter 4:1a_

"Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, (speaking of course of His death on the cross,) arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;" Now that sounds a lot like Paul in Philippians, doesn’t it?

_Philippians 2:5-8_

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6. Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7. But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8. And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." So Peter is aware of the death and the burial and the resurrection, but he never proclaimed it as the Gospel of Salvation, as Paul does. He merely proclaims it as a fact that the One Israel rejected and crucified has now been brought back to life and He is still in a position to bring about the Kingdom and His role as King.

_I Peter 4:2_

"That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God." Now what’s Peter saying here? That when a believer dies for his faith, he naturally is being subjected to the power of ungodly men who put him to death. But as soon as that believer is put to death, he is out from under the authority of the enemies of the flesh, and he’s in the presence of God. And the whole idea here is that when persecution and death stares the believer in the face (and they’ve faced it for thousands of years), we have to take comfort in the fact that once the suffering has ended and death comes, we’re immediately in Glory! And that’s what’s going to have to keep us if we are faced with persecution someday. And the whole thrust here is that (for these Jews Peter is writing to), if they should have to die for their faith, then their eternal life would immediately begin. Now verse 3.

_I Peter 4:3a_
"For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the (who?) Gentiles,..." Now do you see how obvious this is that Peter is talking to Jews? As he writes to Jews he makes reference to those Gentile persecutors. Which, of course, were Romans in that case.

I Peter 4:3b

"...when we walked in (now this was the moral state of the Gentile world in which the Nation of Israel had to move and breath and live. This was typical of Gentiledom) lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, (or drunkenness) revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries:" That was the picture of the Gentile society in which these Jews had to live. Now I’m always reminding people that this was the horrible climate in which the Apostle Paul moved during his whole 25 years of ministry. He was constantly up against this kind of lifestyle. And yet, by just the simple preaching of the Gospel of Salvation (that to believe in your heart that Jesus died for your sins, was buried, and rose again), he had multitudes come out of it and enjoy a Godly lifestyle.

All right, let me just show you a little bit of what I mean by this. Come all the way back to Acts chapter 15 - after they’ve had that counsel at Jerusalem - and when James, Peter and John finally agree that Paul can go out to the Gentiles, and that they (the Twelve) would stay amongst the Nation of Israel, the Jews. Come over with me to Acts 15 verse 19. If you understand the wicked lifestyle, the rotten social structure of the Roman Empire (Gentiles), then you can understand why these Jewish believers like the Twelve were concerned as to how Paul would handle these Gentile converts. So James attaches this string to his okay.

Acts 15:19-20

"Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: (but here’s what he had to warn them against; be sure that they are taught that they have to separate from this kind of Gentile action) 20. But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, (the whole world was steeped in idolatry,) and from fornication, (in other words, the whole Roman Empire living in an immoral state) and from things strangled, (in other words, they had no compunction about the Laws of God,) and from blood."

Now, from day one, even before Israel became a nation, God had given instruction way back there at Noah’s time that the human race was not to partake of drinking blood. But the pagan world was doing it all the time. And these Jews knew that and so James says, "Now all right, if you’re going to go out and preach this Gospel of Grace to the Gentiles, well and good. But make sure they understand that, in the freedom of
Grace, they don’t keep on doing what the Gentiles do." Got the picture? Oh, it was wickedness on every hand. And so when Peter speaks of it in his little epistle, he knows well, and so did Paul.

Now I’m going to stop a minute in Galatians on our way back to I Peter - where Paul gives us the same kind of a verbal picture of the lifestyle of the Gentile world at that time. Now, granted, to a certain degree it’s the same way today. The world has always been this way. But, I think at the time that Paul and Peter are ministering, it was probably worse than maybe any other time in history. And here in Galatians chapter 5 is, again, the verbal picture of the social fabric of the Gentile world at the time Peter and Paul ministered.

Galatians 5:19-20

"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, (no marital fidelity whatsoever) fornication, (the most gross forms of sexual immorality) uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20. Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, sedition, heresies." Not a very pretty society was it? And yet this was normal. This was the lifestyle of the wicked Gentile. All right finish the verse,

Galatians 5:21

"Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God." That was the lifestyle of the Gentiles. And this is what these Jewish believers were up against - when they withdrew from that kind of lifestyle they came under persecution. And so, Peter is admonishing them not to give in and to maintain their testimony with Godly living. All right, now let me read verse 3 in I Peter chapter 4 again, so that you catch the language, how that it’s all the same.

I Peter 4:3a

"For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles,..." In other words, to live like the Gentiles. Now let me stop a minute again. Do you realize that from day one, from the time that Moses brought Israel out of Egypt, what was the one thing that God had to constantly warn Israel to beware of? "Don’t be like the Gentiles." Now think about that. God had to tell them over and over, "Don’t be like the Gentiles." Now I can give you one glaring example of how that came to the top. They’d been ruled by the judges of which Samuel was the last - and in Samuel’s older years, what did Israel come and say? "We want a king like
the Gentiles have. The Gentiles all have kings, why can’t we have a king?" See? That was the first glaring example.

And so all up through their history, God had to constantly warn, "**Don’t ever want to be like those Gentiles.**" But it was a constant temptation to Israel to do just that, and it’s the same way today. That’s one of the big problems even in Israel in the Middle East is that they want to be recognized as just another nation like the Gentiles. **And they’re not supposed to be, they’re supposed to be different.**

All right, and so now back to I Peter again - now this is what Peter is alluding to. Don’t try to assimilate and be like those Gentiles. Now I’ve got another thought. **Have you ever stopped to realize why the Nation of Israel hasn’t disappeared?** You know that’s one of my favorite topics when we’re on seminars with people that I haven’t been teaching all the time. What a miracle that, after three to four thousand years that little tiny nation of never more than fifteen million people has not disappeared. Well they should have. Under normal circumstances they would have intermarried and they would have ceased to be a nation of people. But they didn’t. And they have still maintained their identity in spite of this constant temptation to be like the Gentiles.

If they’re going to be like the Gentiles, then they have no compunction about intermarrying. I read the other day in the Jerusalem Post that 52% of Jewish young people are marrying Gentiles. And, of those 52%, 80% are not raising their children in the Jewish teachings. And so now we’re getting to the place that, if it doesn’t stop, they will disappear. They will go into an assimilation and lose their identity. But, miracle of miracles, so far they have not, and that’s why we think it’s proof that This Book is the Word of God because God says they will not disappear. They will never leave the scene. Now verse 4.

*I Peter 3:4a*

"**Wherein they** (the Gentiles) **think it strange…’** Sound familiar? That’s just like your neighbors around you today, isn’t it? They think we’re kind of strange. There’s something wrong with us that we don’t go out there and revel with the world, see?

*I Peter 3:4b*

"**… that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot,** (Consequently, they’re what? They’re) **speaking evil of you:**" Now verse 5.

*I Peter 1:5*
"Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead." Now what is it saying? That’s a shifting in gears, as I say. Here we have Peter all of a sudden admonishing these Jewish believers not to even want to be like those Gentiles, but why? Because we as believers know that we’re going to be confronted with the Holy Judge of all – God Himself, see? Now that speaks of Christ Who will be the Judge at the Great White Throne. Now verse 6.

_I Peter 1:6a_

"For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead,..." In other words, those that already died for their faith. That’s what we’re driving at here, those who have died by persecution. The Gospel of the Kingdom was preached to them, they died as believers.

_I Peter 1:6b_

"...that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, (they hated them. They didn’t like their holy lifestyle, so they killed them.) but (the result of that persecuted death was to) live according to God in the spirit." Get the picture? So Peter’s admonishing them saying, "Sure, as soon as you separate from the wild drunken living of the Gentiles, they’re going to persecute you, they’re going to hate you, they’re going to kill you. But when they kill you, you immediately end up in the eternal life side, and so it’s still worth it."

Now with this I’m going to take you back to what Paul says in Romans chapter 8, and we may use this again before we get out of I Peter. Now this of course is from the other Apostle. The Apostle of the Gentiles - but we’re dealing with the same God; we’re dealing with the same ungodly world. So that part is no different - whether it’s Paul, whether it’s Peter, whether it’s Jeremiah, or Ezekiel or whether it’s the story of Cain and Abel (because after all why did Cain kill Abel? Because Abel was a just man. And Cain was intensely jealous of his righteous relationship).

_Romans 8:18_

"For I reckon that the sufferings (persecution) of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." You see what he’s saying? Almost the same thing that Peter said, Paul says, "Okay, so you’ve come under intense persecution because of your faith. It may even bring you to the place of physical death, but the minute you slip out of this human experience by virtue of a martyr’s death, you’re into the eternal bliss and presence with the Lord." And that’s what we have to comfort ourselves with if persecution should come; if we are ever faced with a martyr’s death. **We just simply go through it knowing that when**
death comes we escape this old body of flesh and we’re going to be in Glory! And we have no idea of the glory that Glory is going to be! And that’s the thing that keeps motivating us to live under the pressure. Now we’re fortunate in America, we don’t know yet what pressure is, but the day may come that we will.
Lesson One • Part II
The End of All Things is at Hand
1 Peter 4:1 – 5:14

Today we begin in 1 Peter chapter 4, and we left off in the last half-hour in verse 6. And remember the whole scenario here is, Jewish believers who are under intense pressure - and of course, they feel like they’re looking at the seven years of Tribulation (that they thought was right out in front of them). They think it’s just over the horizon, but hopefully, they can go through the Tribulation and witness the Second Coming of Christ and they will be then part and parcel of the Kingdom. Now that is the overall picture as James, Peter, John, and Jude are writing these last little Jewish epistles. Remember these early Jewish believers weren’t promised the Rapture like we have been in the Body of Christ (as only Paul teaches the Body of Christ and the Rapture). The rest of the writers in the Old and New Testament speak only of His second coming after the seven years of Tribulation, and just before the earthly Kingdom Age.

On the top of our Bible timeline, all we can get from the Old Testament is Christ’s earthly ministry, His rejection at the cross, and His ascension (as we see in Acts chapter 1 He ascended back to glory). After that, there is an indeterminate period of time during which Peter and the Eleven have been preaching to the Jews (Acts chapters 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6). And it really doesn’t end until they reject Stephen in chapter 7. And I always call that the crescendo of Israel’s rejection of Jesus of Nazareth. Then, in chapter 9, we have the conversion of Saul of Tarsus and that is the beginning of the end for Israel and the beginning of the beginning for the Gentile Body of Christ, which we see on this bottom part of the timeline.

All right, but this top line is where Peter is still dwelling. Peter is still aware of nothing more than the Old Testament prophecies and Christ’s earthly ministry prophecy. And so here’s what they’re looking at. They’re in this time period after Christ has ascended (after Pentecost), and they’re looking for the horrors of the Tribulation, ending with the Second Coming, and they’ll go into the Kingdom. That’s all they understand. But from our perspective now, God stopped this timeline right here. And instead of bringing in the seven years of Tribulation, He sent the Apostle Paul out into the Gentile world, calling out the Body of Christ. And we have now been in this 1,900 plus years period of time and we now are waiting for the Rapture to take the Body of Christ off the scene. And then the timeline will pick right up where it left off as it is up here.
And that’s why, as I said in the beginning of the last program, everything that disappeared together back in the first century is now reappearing together as we are now in 2003 and we are looking for the Lord’s appearing for us at any time. In light of this, Peter and these early Jewish believers are on this top line. Peter sees nothing but the horrors of the Tribulation facing them but believes, if they can survive it, they’re going to see the return of the King in glory, and they’ll be going into the Kingdom. In fact, we’re going to look at Matthew 24 to clarify some of this, but first let’s read verse 6 here in I Peter chapter 4. That’s where we left off. Now they’ve gone through persecution, and if they’ve died, so much the better - they’re now in the Lord’s presence. And so this is who he’s referring to in verse 6, those who have been martyred and put to death for their faith

I Peter 4:6

"For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, (they’ve been persecuted and they’ve been martyred.) that they might be judged according to men in the flesh,(In other words, men hated their testimony. But as a result of their martyr’s death of course) but live according to God in the spirit." Now verse 7, what’s the first word? "But." What does that mean? The flipside!

I Peter 4:7

"But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer." Well now, can you see why Peter says the end of all things is at hand. They’re right here on this top timeline. Christ has been crucified. He’s ascended. Peter’s been preaching to the Nation of Israel. The persecution has scattered them out of Jerusalem and he’s still writing to the Jews scattered. But all of this is leading up to the next event on the Old Testament program, which would be the seven years of the Tribulation and the return of Christ and the Kingdom. That’s what they’re looking for. All right, now, we’re going to let this go for the time being because this does not come about until Paul comes out and begins to preach the Gospel of Grace and the outcalling of the Gentile Body of Christ. But, as we teach this we’re up here on this top timeline. All through these little Jewish epistles, they’re preparing these Jewish believers for the seven years that are coming. All right, back to Matthew 24. And this is back in Christ’s earthly ministry. And that’s why it ties so beautifully with what Peter says here. Matthew 24 verse 1.

Sometimes I just get in such a hurry to get through these Books to get to the next one, but we’ll take our time. We’re in no big hurry. If the Lord comes before we finish Peter, why so much the better! As we begin this passage, Christ is toward the end of His earthly ministry and the Twelve, in view of the Kingdom, don’t as yet realize that
He’s going to be crucified in short order, and put to death. **They just think that everything’s going to keep on going until the King sets up the Kingdom.**

*Matthew 24:1-2*

"And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. 2. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." Now remember He’s God. He knows the end from the beginning. He knew that the Romans would be coming in and destroying it all.

*Matthew 24:3*

"And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples (the Twelve) came unto him privately, (In other words, no press of the crowds here. Just Jesus and the Twelve) saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" Now they were aware of the coming of the King and the Kingdom - but a destruction of the Temple? That all these things would be destroyed? So, "When will these things be? What shall be the sign of thy coming and the end of the ages?" Which would be the thousand-year reign and rule of Jesus Christ.

*Matthew 24:4*

"And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you." Don’t be taken up with deception. Now, even as you read this, that was so appropriate for the top timeline - my it just fits perfectly, getting them ready for the seven years. The Lord knew it wasn’t going to happen but He still never betrayed the secret of it all and so He’s speaking as if this is coming along this top line.

Now we can bring ourselves in here and it’s almost identical. We’re in the same scenario today that Peter was back then. And so it all fits, whether it was Peter back in his day in the late 50’s in the first century. Or whether it’s us living today in 2003, there’s not that much difference. All right, now look what he said, "Take heed that no man deceive you."

What is the world getting shot full of? Deception! My, when I hear of all the religious stuff that’s up there on that Internet, it’s everything from soup to nuts. And what is it? Ninety-nine percent is as false as a $3.00 bill. But most people can’t tell the difference. **And that’s one reason I enjoy teaching is to get people so ingrained in the Book that when they see that garbage, they can recognize it for what it is.**
Pure garbage! So Jesus warned us. He warned the people of His day. Remember now, we’re looking at two different time scenarios and yet they’re almost the same.

Matthew 24:5a

"For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many." Oh, they use the name of Jesus Christ glibly. They are ministers of the Gospel. Ha! But they don’t use the same Book that we do. All right, and so we’re warned. "Many shall come in my name saying I am the Christ and they shall deceive many." Now verse 6. If this isn’t today’s news, I don’t’ know what is.

Matthew 24:6

"And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet." Now you want to remember, as Peter and those believing Jews were facing that scenario, the Roman Empire was known for it’s peace-keeping for a good period of time, but the world has never been stable. There’s always been somebody wanting what somebody else has got. You know, some of these pacifists think that we should just lay down our arms and bring home our armies and just sit here and enjoy life. Phooey! How long would we last? Three months, two months? Maybe not that. Because it’s been a fact of human history, if you’ve got something that’s worth keeping, you have to fight for it. You have to shed blood to keep it. It’s been a fact of history. And it’s no different today.

So even back then there were constant rumors of war, one empire wanting to destroy another. But Jesus said, "The end isn’t yet." Now verse 7.

Matthew 24:7

"For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: (my we’re seeing that today with the threat of terrorism around the world and the unstable governments everywhere) and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places." Now of course, they weren’t as aware of that as we are because they didn’t have the technology. But somebody sent me something the other day on the earthquake activity around the world. If you just want to see what’s going on, just get up there on the Internet. You can see earthquakes every day. Well, they didn’t use to know that (because of the technology) like we do now. Now verse 8.

Matthew 24:8
"All these (things that are pretty much commonplace in human history but now they’re going to be in such magnitude) are the beginning of sorrows." (or travail)

Now the word ‘travail’ speaks of the woman about to be delivered. Now, we can use that same thing as a background. Come back with me to Jeremiah 30 - now this is prophecy. And you want to remember that in Jeremiah’s day he was speaking of the Babylonian captivity that was about to come. And the Nation of Israel would be removed from the land, but God’s going to bring them back, and did.

The same thing happened in 70 AD - they were removed from the land but now in our lifetime, God has brought them back, so even though these prophecies are written in 600-and-some BC, it’s a two-fold prophecy. The near and the far. All right, Jeremiah chapter 30, starting at verse 1,

Jeremiah 30:1-3

"The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, 2. Thus speaketh the LORD God of Israel, (so we’re dealing with the Jewish people here) saying. Write thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee in a book. (in other words, God’s telling Jeremiah to write God’s words) 3. For, lo, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the LORD: and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers and they shall possess it." Now that happened twice. The first time they came back after the Babylonian captivity under Ezra and Nehemiah and rebuilt the Temple and got ready for Christ’s first coming. Then in 70 AD, they were dispersed the second time, went out into every nation under heaven, and now they’re back in the land the second time. Okay, so "they will come back to the land that I gave to their fathers and they shall possess it."

Jeremiah 30:4-7a

"And these are the words that the LORD spake concerning Israel and concerning Judah. 5. For thus saith the LORD; We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. (here it comes) 6. Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? (like a woman at childbirth.) Wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? 7. Alas! for that day is great,…” This is the Tribulation as we know it and Israel has faced this more than once. But this, in particular, is what Peter was preparing his people for and what we are now talking about in the same kind of language.

Jeremiah 30:7b
"…so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob’s (Israel’s) trouble;…" That’s why I’ve said adamantly that the Church will not fit in that seven years of Tribulation. You cannot force the Church into that time of Jacob’s trouble - we’re Gentiles. They’re Jews. It’s prophecy. You’ve got to be able to separate the Scriptures, because we’re back here in the revelation of the mysteries with the Apostle Paul. And so you cannot, by any stretch of the imagination, put the Church into the Tribulation, whether it’s up there on the timeline or whether it’s over here on the timeline, that doesn’t matter. It will not fit, because the Tribulation is the time of Jacob’s trouble. It’s God dealing primarily with the Nation of Israel, and it’s going to be in judgment. Why should He bring judgment on the believing Church? Just doesn’t make sense. But He is going to bring judgment on unbelieving Israel.

Okay, now let’s go back to where we were in Matthew 24, because I’m not to the verse yet that I wanted. Verse 8 again.

**Matthew 24:8**

"All these are the beginning of sorrows." (travail) Today we’re not in the Tribulation as some think. Good heavens, there are a lot of people that think so, but we’re not. We are not in the Tribulation, but we’re seeing the world get ready for it. The stage is being set. That’s the best way I can put it. Everything that we’re seeing happen around the globe is simply preparing the world for these days. See? And we’re close. Now verse 9. Remember Jesus is speaking to Jews.

**Matthew 24:9a**

"Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you:…" Now do you see how that rhymes with what Peter has been writing about? They were in the same thing. They were already being killed for their faith and it was going to get worse. And so Jesus is speaking the very same thing, even though now we’re 1,900 and some years later.

**Matthew 24:9b**

"…and ye shall be hated of (not all nations but one, but how many?) all nations for my name’s sake." Now today, Israel is hated by everybody but one – America. We’re the only nation on earth that’s a true friend of Israel, and we’d better stay that way until the Lord comes. But, even during the Tribulation, America for one reason or another, will no longer be that friend of Israel. Either we’re gone, or we, like the rest of the world, will turn against them. I prefer to think that we’ll be gone. So, "they’ll deliver you up and you will be hated of all the nations for my name’s sake." Not
because they’re Jews but because they are God’s people and the world hates anything concerning the people of God.

All right, now then, with that backdrop, let’s go back to I Peter and maybe this will make a little more sense yet because I know, like I said in the last program, I’ve learned a bunch myself as I’ve been preparing this for broadcasting. And I imagine anybody out there that knows how to study will see a lot of things that I’ve missed. All right, I Peter chapter 4 verse 7 again.

I Peter 4:7a

"But the end of all things is at hand:..."

Not 2,000 years from now "at hand." Now we’ve got to stop and think. Is this inspired of the Holy Spirit? Of course it is! But see, even Jesus in His earthly ministry never betrayed the secret of the interruption of the timeline with the out-calling of the Body of Christ. He spoke and taught with the exception of two, that I can find, that it was all going to stay right along that line of prophecy. He did not betray that one bit. Neither did the Holy Spirit allow these writers to betray it. So by Spirit inspiration, they write as if it’s all going to continue like the top timeline. So Peter can write:

I Peter 1:7

"But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer." But now remember we should also be in that same attitude today because we are getting so close. Oh, we’re not going to have to go through any part of the Tribulation, but we’ll know when it’s at the door.

I Peter 1:8

"And above all things have fervent charity (love) among yourselves: for charity (love) shall cover the multitude of sins." Now that’s self-explanatory. You don’t need a theologian’s degree for that. You know, I told Iris a while back, I can remember a song that was on the radio quite a bit several years ago, and I loved it. She didn’t remember ever hearing it. I guess that’s when she was working every day. Many of you will have heard it. ‘Love Changes Everything.’ Remember that one? Sure you do. And how true. Love does change everything!

And it’s exactly what this says. When love is operating, it makes a whole different scenario. Whether it’s in the home; whether it’s in the business world - anywhere - love changes everything. And that’s what Peter is admonishing these believers to do. Don’t be nitpicking at each other. Don’t be making life miserable. You’ve got enough
problems from the outside world. But at least show your love for one another. When I looked at this last night I couldn’t help but think of Florida. Iris and I enjoyed that two-three weeks of seminar teachings because of the hospitality. I figured up last night - you know how many different homes we were in? We were in nine different homes and the hospitality was just beyond your imagination. All right, that’s as Christians should be, see? Verse 9.

I Peter 4:9-10a

"Use hospitality one to another without grudging. 10. As every man hath received the gift, (that is of salvation) even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards...." What’s a steward? A caretaker or a manager. You remember when Abraham was way back there in Genesis and God was promising him a son; what did old Abraham say? "Well now Lord, you know I haven’t got a son. All I’ve got is this steward, Eliezer of Damascus." Well what was Eliezer? He was the manager of all of Abraham’s material wealth, see? All right, Paul uses the same word. In fact, let’s go back and look at it. We’ve got time enough. So turn with me to I Corinthians chapter 4, and it’s a word that applies to believers of any day.

I Corinthians 4:1-2

"Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. 2. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found (what?) faithful." Now what is the law-breaking sin of an unfaithful steward? Embezzlement. Right? If you’ve got an unfaithful manager, he will, nine times out of ten, end up embezzling you into bankruptcy. Isn’t that right? Sure. And so here was the whole scenario that Paul lays out to you and I as believers. Don’t be an embezzler, but be a faithful steward of these mysteries which, of course, are the revelations of Paul.

Now Peter is referring to something different than Paul’s revelation, but it’s the same language that these Jews were to be faithful managers, or keepers, or stewards of these things of God, and they were to show it with their love toward one another. Now verse 11.

I Peter 4:11a

"If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles (or as the Word) of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth:...."

You know I’ve told teachers and pastors (and I’m constantly reminding myself), we have to be so careful that when we get ready to teach a class or prepare a sermon that
we don’t put so much work and study and notes into it that we rely on the flesh. That’s the problem. I’ve seen people go up into the pulpit with a stack of notes that high. Well, that’s the flesh. Now granted we have to study. But if we’re going to rely on a bunch of notes to bring out the Word of God, then there’s something wrong because we have to be moved as the Spirit directs and not just simply as the flesh has prepared.

Now I’m not against preparation. That’s necessary. **But if we’re going to get into a situation of teaching or preaching the Word, we have to come to the place where the Spirit takes over.** The Spirit has to bring us the words; the Holy Spirit has to bring the thoughts. That’s my prayer just before I come in here every taping. I go to the back restroom and there I ask the Lord, now just pour out the Pneuma-Hagion, that it’ll be the Spirit that speaks through me.
Lesson One • Part III

The End of All Things is at Hand

I Peter 4:1 – 5:14

Okay, let’s get back to where we were in our last lesson. And again, I need to remind you, as we have new people joining us every day, that these little Jewish epistles are written to the Jewish believers who have been scattered from Acts 8:1 - I think predominately to the Jewish churches in the area of Asia Minor and Western Turkey. Probably it’s the same Jewish churches that are addressed in Revelation 1 through 3. And the whole idea was to prepare them not only for the suffering of the Tribulation that was ahead of them, but also to cope with the suffering that they were already under because of the Roman oppression and so forth.

And I think you are now aware that these were Jewish believers being prepared by Peter, James and John for the horrors of the Tribulation through which they would have to pass if they were going to enter into the glories of the earthly Kingdom. All right, now we saw that so vividly back up in verse 7, where Peter said:

I Peter 4:7a

"But the end of all things is at hand:…" And then we ended the last lesson at verse 11, and I think we’re ready to start in verse 12 where Peter now goes on to say:

I Peter 4:12a

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try (or test) you,….." Present or future? Future. He’s looking at the seven years of Tribulation up here in the top line. Peter doesn’t know about Paul’s outcalling of the Gentiles with the pure Gospel of Grace. Now, he will by the time we get to II Peter. But you see you’ve got a time element involved. When he writes on this top line in I Peter, he’s probably writing back there about the time that Paul’s letters are just coming out. By the time he writes II Peter (which is about eight years later) then, of course, he is aware of Paul’s epistles and he will make mention of them. But up here in I Peter there is not a word about Paul; not a word about Paul’s Gospel; not a word about Gentiles; it’s just as if he doesn’t even know that Paul is out there. But, he is preparing these Jewish believers for the fiery trials that are out in front of them - the Tribulation. Now continuing verse 12.

I Peter 4:12b
"...as though some strange thing happened unto you:" And, remember, as soon as the Tribulation begins, the supernatural begins. It’s going to be unusual. Whether it would have happened then or whether it’s going to happen in our day, that’s beside the point. It was going to be a supernatural period of time. All right, verse 13.

**I Peter 4:13**

"**But rejoice,** (because if they can survive the pressures, they’re going to enter into the glory of the Kingdom) **inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.**" What’s he talking about? The Kingdom. And he says again, "If you can come through these fiery trials." Remember he’s up here on this top timeline. If you can come through these fiery trials and witness the return of Christ, and go into the glory of His Kingdom.... Now sometimes people will say, "Well, how in the world do you come to a conclusion like that?" Well, I’m going to show you.

Go back with me in Matthew (in Christ’s earthly ministry). Matthew chapter 19, and let’s start with verse 27. Now all of this will make sense if you just keep it in that top timeline. Remember it’s all Jewish. All of this was just going to be coming down the pike. Peter has no idea that it would be interrupted by almost 2,000 years with Paul’s Gospel of Grace. But we can now look back and see how beautifully it was interrupted.

**Matthew 19:27**

"**Then answered Peter and said unto him,** (that is unto the Lord) **Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we (the Twelve) have therefore?**" In other words, what’s he complaining about? Well, he’s not really complaining and yet on the other hand, he’s saying, "Okay now Lord, we left our fishing business. We left the beauty of the Galilee." And I think I may have mentioned on the program, there isn’t a more beautiful sight on earth than sunrise on the Galilee. Some of you have been there with us, and it’s just gorgeous!

He loved his fishing business. His family. And Peter now says "We left all that to follow you, what are we going to have?" Now he’s not talking about salvation, he’s talking about reward. Now look what the Lord says, and He wasn’t playing games with them.

**Matthew 19:28a**

"**And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me,** (in other words, the Twelve - we’re going to kick Judas out in a little while, but he’s
still included here. Those of you who have followed me) in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory,…" Now you always have to pick that verse apart or you’ll miss the meaning of it. Most of you have heard me do this before, maybe some out in television never have. When "the regeneration" – what does that mean? When the earth is regenerated or reconstituted or remade like it was in the beginning. The earth is going to go back to that which was before the curse fell. And it’s going to be glorious. It’s going to be beautiful once again. And Christ is going to be sitting on the throne of His glory. Not in Heaven, but in Jerusalem, on Mount Zion. All right, so the Lord is referring to all that and He says to Peter and the Eleven:

Matthew 19:28b

"...That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Now that hasn’t happened yet, but they were expecting it to happen in their lifetime. Now do you have to have some seminary degree to understand that? No. That’s plain English. That when He returns at the end of the Tribulation and sets up that Kingdom, He’s going to be King of Kings and Lord of Lords - but the Twelve are going to be ruling the twelve tribes of Israel from smaller thrones there on Mount Zion. That’s as plain as I can make it. And this is what Peter and the others never forgot.

And when we teach Acts, we always point that out. Why was Peter in such a terrible hurry to fill the twelfth slot after Judas was gone? Because they expected all this to come in short order, and you don’t rule twelve tribes with eleven men. They had to have the twelfth one. And so the first thing on Peter’s agenda in Acts 1 was to fill the spot left open by Judas.

On our way back to Peter, let’s just stop at Acts chapter 8, and I can throw a curve at some of these theologians who evidently don’t read some of these things. Acts chapter 8 verse 1. Now Israel has just stoned Stephen - killed him - because Stephen made the last appeal to the Nation of Israel to repent of having crucified their Messiah. All right, now look at Acts 8:1 and how can anybody miss it?

Acts 8:1a

"And Saul was consenting unto his death. (that is Stephen’s) And at that time there was a great persecution (headed up by Saul) against the church (Jewish assembly) which was at Jerusalem;..." That church or that assembly of Jewish believers, who had embraced Jesus as the Messiah. And they were just a small, small percentage of the vast number of Jews who were still practicing Temple worship in
Jerusalem. These were those Jewish believers beginning from Christ’s earthly ministry and Pentecost. And now here we are seven or eight years later, and a great persecution has begun.

Acts 8:1b

"...and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles."

Now these are the Jews that Peter and James and John are writing to, remember? They were all scattered except who? "the apostles." I don’t think anybody ever reads that! Here most teachers and preachers have been trying to tell us (at least that’s the way I was taught for years and years) that Christianity began way back there at Pentecost, and the Twelve were out there ministering to the Gentiles. No they weren’t. This verse says they were still sitting tight in Jerusalem. They weren’t about to leave. Why? Because when the King comes, where is He coming to? Jerusalem.

My goodness, when the King comes, who wants to be out in Babylon? When the King comes, who wants to be in Spain? They were going to be right there when it happened and so they didn’t leave, in spite of intense persecution. They stayed right there at Jerusalem thinking that all this was going to be happening within a matter of a few years. Now back to I Peter chapter 4 again.

I Peter 4:13a

"But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings;..." Now, sure, Peter is referring to Jesus’ crucifixion. They knew that that was a fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy. Psalms 22 is a clear picture and so is Isaiah 53. So it wasn’t that these Jewish believers didn’t know, now, that He had died for the sins of the world. But they did not knowPaul’s Gospel of salvation (which is that Jesus died for our sins, was buried and rose again, and that you and I must believe for salvation) would go to the whole world without a part of Israel and Israel’s religion of Judaism. All right, so he’s referring back to the work of the cross, naturally.

I Peter 4:13

"But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." Well what’s he talking about? When Christ would come and set up His earthly Kingdom! Now let’s go back to the Old Testament. Go back to Zechariah chapter 12, because I want everyone to see how this is all in perfect accord with the Old Testament prophecies. And then we’re going to turn over to chapter 13.
Zechariah 12:10a

"And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son,..." Now this is not a mourning as we would think of losing a loved one in death, but this is a mourning as the eleven sons of Jacob mourned, or rejoiced, when they were reunited with whom? Joseph. What did they do? My, they hung on his neck and they wept. Well it wasn’t a weeping like we would do when we lose someone in death, but it was a weeping of now being reunited with a loved one. And they just literally hung on his neck and wept tears of joy.

All right, I think you’ve got the same scenario here - when Israel as a nation will suddenly realize that this One in their midst is the One that had been crucified. And again, Peter is still talking in proximity of only a few years, remember. And they were expecting His soon return and all of this certainly fits, that they would see the One Whom they had pierced. They would mourn. They would have tears of rejoicing that the Messiah, the King, the Redeemer is alive and He’s in their midst:

Zechariah 12:10b-11

"...and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. 11. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon." Now turn to Zechariah 13:6. This, again, is part and parcel of when He would return, and Israel would suddenly, as a nation, recognize Who He is.

Zechariah 13:6

"And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends," Now we’re going to be careful. It wasn’t the Jews who actually carried out the wounding; it was the Romans. But it was in Jerusalem. It was in the house of the House of David. Okay, let’s go back once again to I Peter chapter 4 and we’ll pick up in verse 14.

I Peter 4:14a

"If ye be reproached for the name of Christ,..." That’s not hard to understand is it? That’s always been the case. The true believers were always hated and detested. All the way back into Israel’s history, the unbelieving, pagan worshipping Jews killed and detested those that were believers. My, you remember the parable that Jesus gave of
the husbandman who planted a vineyard? Got it ready to go into production, leased it out and went into a far country.

He pretty well knew when that crop would be harvested and when his share of the crop would be due. So he sent his servants and what did the lease holders of that vineyard do to his servants? They killed them. You know the parable. And over and over every year he would send his servants and they would kill them. And then finally, he said, I’ll send my Son. Certainly they will reverence my son. What’d they do with the son? They killed Him also. And then of course, I always feel that Stephen is the epitome of the third person of the Trinity and that is what I always associate with the unpardonable sin of Israel. And when Stephen (full of the Holy Spirit, full of the Holy Ghost), throughout chapters 6 and 7 of Acts, appealed to the nation for the last time to recognize Who Jesus of Nazareth was, what did they do with Stephen? They killed him.

And so the parable was in regard to Israel - that Israel was the vineyard. Christ was the husbandman, and when He went to a far country and He sent His servants (those were the prophets of the Old Testament), they killed them. Then finally He sent the Son and they crucified Him. Then He sent Stephen who represented the Holy Spirit, and they stoned and killed him. And so Israel nationally rejected all three persons of the Trinity. Now verse 14 again.

I Peter 4:14

"If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part (that is the persecutors, whether it was Jews or Romans) he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified." Ring a bell? You know why the world in general hates our President? Because he makes no apology for his faith in Jesus Christ. Now, don’t expect him to preach Jesus Christ from the White House, he cannot. I don’t expect him to. He’s the President of a pluralistic society. But I have talked to several people who have met with him personally and he makes no apology for his faith and his trust. And I just have no reason to not pray for the man, day in and day out. But I don’t expect him to be an evangelist in the White House. I just can’t see that God expects it either. But, here we have that the world detests the name of Jesus Christ. We know they do.

So "...he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified." Now, this is applicable for us just as it was for the Jews of Jesus’ day. The world should see Christ living in us wherever we go. All right now verse 15.

I Peter 4:15
"But let none of you (as believers) suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men’s matters." That’s not part of the believer’s lifestyle.

I Peter 4:16-17a

"Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, (now here the word ‘Christian’ is used by someone that you don’t expect to hear it from because Christians were usually associated with Paul’s Gospel, but here Peter uses the term for whatever reason and we can just take it as one who is Christ-like) let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf. 17. "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God:..." (Israel)

Now of course a lot of preachers and evangelists like to refer to the church as the house of God and, in a symbolic way, maybe that’s all right. But in its text here as it sits, Israel is the house of God. Israel was to be the example to the world. That was the whole purpose of God setting them apart and above - head and shoulders above all the rest of the world. They were to be the living example of the True God in the midst of an unbelieving world.

Now of course, that has been placed on you and I as members of the Body of Christ. But Peter is not addressing the Body of Christ. Peter is addressing only Jews. And so he says again: "The time has come that judgment (or God’s dealing now righteously) must begin at the house of God." Now if this doesn’t make it clear I don’t know what can. Peter says:

I Peter 4:17b

"...and if it first begin at us...." And who’s the us? I’m trying to think of the old comic strip that says, "We’ve met the enemy and he is us." But it’s just about the same thing. Who are the ones that are to be God’s example? Israel. They’re the ‘us.’ And so he says:

I Peter 4:17c

"... what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?" Because if it can’t be shown through Israel, how in the world can the rest of the world measure up? Well, they can’t. And they didn’t and they won’t. See? Now verse 18.

I Peter 4:18
"And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" Well I’ll tell you where they’ll appear. Turn back with me to Revelation chapter 20. This is where the non-believing element of the world is going to be. And that goes all the way back to the first registered unbeliever – Cain, until the last one at the end of the Kingdom. The last one and they’ll all be brought, before the Great White Throne in verse 11.

Revelation 20:11-15

"And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12. And I saw the dead, (that is the lost of all the ages) small and great, (whether they were just a slave in the bottom of a Roman ship, or whether they were kings and queens - makes no difference, they’re all going to) stand before God; and the books (plural) were opened: and another book (singular) was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead (the lost) were judged out of those things which were written in the books, (the daily record) according to their works. 13. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death, and hell delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works. 14. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. (or the spiritual death that is the eternal separation of lost mankind from their Creator) 15. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." All right, now come back if you will for just a second to chapter 20 and verse 10.

Revelation 20:10

"And the devil that deceived them was cast into the last of fire and brimstone, where the beast (anti-Christ) and the false prophet are and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." Now that’s what the Book says.
Lesson One • Part IV

The End of All Things is at Hand

I Peter 4:1 – 5:14

All we want to do as we teach is to just open the Book and let people begin to study on their own. And I think the Lord is doing that in a lot of hearts. He’s is showing them how to read and enjoy and study the Book on their own. It’s so thrilling when people write or call and tell us, "For the first time, I’m studying my Bible and enjoying it."

Okay, let’s pick right up where we left off in the last lesson, and we are now in I Peter chapter 5. And, again, for review, these little epistles are written to Jewish believers who had been scattered out of the area of Jerusalem and Judea, probably by Saul’s persecution - and they have established little congregations around that part of the eastern Mediterranean. But I think that these little letters that Peter writes are primarily written to Jewish congregations in the western end of Turkey.

Now the book of James, on the other hand, was probably written to one larger congregation of Jewish believers, but not necessarily at Jerusalem - maybe Alexandria or maybe one of the areas up in northern Galilee.

Now, we don’t want to leave the impression that Peter is associating the salvation of these Jews as being accomplished by their martyrdom. I hope that didn’t come across like that in the last lesson because we’re all aware now that the idea behind the Muslim suicide bombers is that, if they can become a martyr, they’re going to immediately go to Paradise. Well, that is not at all what we teach - that when you go through martyrdom you are guaranteed an eternal life.

But for the believer, for the true saved individual that is martyred, yes, he is going to be instantly in the Lord’s presence just like anyone who dies a natural death. So the martyr’s death does not, in itself, guarantee salvation, as that is accomplished when you believe in your heart that Jesus died for your sins, was buried, and rose again. We call that Paul’s Gospel of salvation found over in I Corinthians 15:1-4.

Now then, as we come into chapter 5 this is pretty much along the same line that Paul teaches for establishing his Gentile churches. And no doubt a lot of this was patterned after the synagogues of Israel, and it just falls in line that the Jewish believers are under the same God that we Gentile believers are. Never forget that. We’ve got the same God Who is dealing with both sides – the Jew and the Gentile. And then, of
course, when we get to Paul, there is a breakdown of the distinction between Jew and Gentile. The middle wall of partition has been broken down. And now in this Age of Grace, there is no difference between black or white, rich or poor, Jew or Gentile - we are all one in the Body of Christ!

Iris and I experience it all the time. We can go into a home that’s as modest as can be, and the spiritual camaraderie is just as good as it is on up the scale. We’ve gone into black families’ homes and we have just thoroughly enjoyed that because we’re all members of the Body of Christ and there are no distinctions. All right, so now then, coming down into chapter 5, dealing with these Jewish congregations, you have the same kind of language, where Peter says in verse 1:

I Peter 5:1a

"The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder,..." (speaking of himself). Now I’ve pointed this out in other times (but we certainly know) that, at Pentecost, and even during Christ’s earthly ministry, Peter was the headman. Peter spoke for the Twelve invariably and, at Pentecost, everybody recognized Peter as the head of the Jewish Jerusalem church. But now come back with me to Galatians chapter 2, where some of you have heard me teach this. Galatians chapter 2, and I want to bring you down to verse 9, because you may have never seen this before.

Now the setting is the Jerusalem counsel. After several years of Paul’s ministry, false teachers emanating from the Jerusalem church were coming in behind Paul and telling Paul’s Gentile converts that they had to keep the Law and circumcision in order to be saved. You can read that over in the first 5 verses of Acts chapter 15. And, Paul and Barnabas meet with Peter, James and John up there in Jerusalem to refute that. But, the point I want to make here is that Peter has now lost that place of ‘top man’ authority. It is now James who is in charge.

Galatians 2:9a

"And when James, Cephas, (Peter) and John, who seemed to be pillars,..." In other words, they had lost a lot of their authority because Israel is continuing to reject everything and they are sliding on down to the dispersion of 70 AD. But just like Peter shows in his epistles back here, they’re not aware of that yet. They think everything is still ‘A-OK.’ They still think Israel is going to go into, and through, the Tribulation and have their King and their Kingdom in short order. But, here it’s obvious now that James, who was not even the James of the Twelve (he’s been beheaded); but this James is now the moderator of this meeting.

Galatians 2:9
"And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived (or understood) the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, (Gentiles) and they unto the circumcision. (Jews)

All right now the companion passage is Acts 15, and let’s go back there where it’s more obvious that James is the moderator. Acts 15 verse 13. We were here, I think, in one of the previous programs for a different reason, but now it’s to show that Peter is no longer the head honcho of the Jewish equation. James is.

Acts 15:13

"And after they had held their peace, James (the moderator) answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me:" And then you come down to verse 19 and James continues:

Acts 15:19a

"Wherefore my sentence is,..." So James is the one who is making the authoritative statement, not Peter, and that should be sufficient. Now the same way with the order of how these little Jewish epistles (and I think the Holy Spirit did it purposely), where James is first, not Peter. It’s James’ epistle, and then we go to I Peter and II Peter and then John, and Jude.

Okay, here we are now in I Peter chapter 5, and we’re going to have the organization laid out much as it was in the Jewish Synagogue, but also in Paul’s instructions to the Gentile churches in I Timothy chapter 3. All right, verse 1 again:

I Peter 5:1

"The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, (he doesn’t claim to be the head man; he’s just merely one of the elders) and a witness of the sufferings of Christ,(in other words, Peter was there at the crucifixion) and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:" Now what in the world do you suppose he was talking about? Well I think he was talking about the Transfiguration. And you remember what happened at the Transfiguration? Let’s go back and look at it in Matthew 16 verse 28, where Jesus is speaking now to the Twelve. And He says:

Matthew 16:28
"Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here (not all of them, only three) which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." Quite a statement wasn’t it? Now chapter 17 and verse 1.

Matthew 17:1-2

"And after six days (six days later) Jesus taketh Peter, (now there he’s in first place) James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, 2. And was transfigured before them: (now here was the glory that I think Peter is referring to in his little epistle) and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light." Now that’s glorious in my book. It was almost blinding, okay, so that’s the Glory that I think Peter can make reference to, that he and James and John had witnessed it. And, of course, it was just a little preview of the glory that He will reveal when He comes and sets up His Kingdom - when again He will be that Light of the world. All right, back to I Peter chapter 5, and continuing verse 1.

I Peter 5:1b

"...who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:" In other words, when Christ returns, that glory of the Transfiguration will be fulfilled to its completeness.

I Peter 5:2

"Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;" In other words, what’s Peter saying? You don’t enter into the Lord’s service with the idea of monetary return. That’s not a reason for serving. Naturally every servant has to have enough to feed himself and his family and so forth, but it is not the prerequisite for service. All right, so "Feed the flock of God," be a shepherd, and again I think in the Synagogue there were the upper shepherds and the lower shepherds.

I Peter 5:3-4

"Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being examples to the flock. 4. And when the chief Shepherd (capitalized) shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." Now, come back with me to John’s Gospel. When we speak of sheep and the shepherd and the flock, what people are we generally speaking of? Israel! Israel is always referred to as sheep, Christ is always referred to as the Shepherd, and He uses the parables of the Shepherd. And I cannot find anything that pertains to Gentiles being called God’s sheep.
All right, John’s Gospel, chapter 21 (and you all know the account back here in John’s Gospel chapter 21, in His resurrected body and how He appears to the Eleven up there at Galilee). And after the miracle of the net full of fish that did not break, now come down to verse 15 (after they had eaten that delicious bread and fish). You know I referred to it several programs back. That must have been the most delicious meal ever served up to mortal man. That is if you like fish like Iris and I do. My, that’s one thing that we enjoy about our seminars in Florida. We eat fish until it comes out our ears and we love it. But I’ll bet this was super! Don’t you know that the Lord knows how to do everything better than any mortal? But He has fish ready for them to eat and He says:

*John 21:15a*

"So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?..." Now some people think He’s talking about his fellow disciples. I don’t. I think He’s talking about fish because that was his business, he was a fisherman. He loved fish like I love cattle. Now that’s all there is to it - let’s be honest about it. But now he’s put on the spot. Peter do you love me more than your fishing business up on Galilee? Are you ready to turn your back on all that and be my servant?

*John 21:15b*

"...He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my (what?) lambs." Now what are lambs? Well they’re sheep. So who are the sheep in Scripture? Israel. So who was Peter to be feeding? Jews. And who does Peter feed? Jews. And always remember that. He’s obedient to what the Lord told him. Well, let’s just keep going while we’re here for a little bit.

*John 21:16-17*

"He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him Feed my sheep. 17. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time. Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus said unto him, Feed my sheep." What do you suppose those three commands set opposite? Peter’s denials. Three times when Peter said, "I don’t know that man." Three times the Lord says, "Feed my sheep." Okay now, this is exactly what he’s referring to now in his little epistle, then, that it’s his responsibility as well as the rest of the Jewish leadership to "feed God’s sheep," and that’s Israel, the Jewish element. Verse 3 again.
I Peter 5:3

"Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being examples to the flock." Now what is always the first thing you think of when you think of the word "flock?" A flock of sheep. Verse 4.

I Peter 5:4a

"And when the chief Shepherd shall appear,..." See how all the language fits. Now Israel’s chief Shepherd (their Messiah, their King, their Redeemer, their Savior, but also their chief Shepherd and all those promises, the Old Testament), are finally going to be fulfilled and He will be the Shepherd of the sheep in His pasture. Now reading on.

I Peter 5:4-6a

"And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, (those believing Jews, faithful to martyrdom even) ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. 5. Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. 6. Humble yourselves...." In other words, humility is something that we have to generate ourselves. Humility is not a gift, it’s something that we have to precipitate.

I Peter 5:6-7

"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, (and if we remain humble) that he may exalt you in due time: 7. Casting all your care upon him; (Now he’s drawing from the Old Testament promises) for he careth for you." In fact let’s go look at it, that would be in Psalms 55. Let’s go back and check that one. The Holy Spirit has caused Peter to draw from this verse and, of course, David knew what it was to rely totally upon his God.

Psalms 55:22

"Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer (permit) the righteous to be moved." Casting all your cares upon him. All right, back to I Peter chapter 5 again. Verse 8. If you’re going to cast your cares upon the Lord Jesus, then it behooves us to live accordingly. And we’re to:

I Peter 5:8
"Be sober, (we’re to) be vigilant; (in other words, we’ve got to be on top of it constantly) because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:" But, as I was thinking this over last night, how does Paul depict Satan? II Corinthians, chapter 11, and let’s drop down to verse 14. Now remember what Peter just said, "Beware of Satan who is as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour." Paul depicts him:

II Corinthians 11:14-15

"And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed (not) into (a lion but a what?) an angel of light. 15. Therefore, it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works."

Now as I was thinking of this, which form, if you had a choice, would you rather be confronted with, the lion, or the angel of light? I’ll take the lion any day because you know you’re in trouble with him. But with that angel of light, you’ve got to be wise as a serpent to see the difference, because it’s so subtle. And you know, we’re finding it out more and more about all the false teaching that’s coming in off the Internet and off television. My goodness, I just read an article the other night by one of the old Bible scholars of a by-gone day and he used the analogy of "steak laced with arsenic." How does it taste? Delicious, but the more you eat of it the quicker you’re going to die. Well, you see, that’s exactly what Satan is doing today. He’s lacing gorgeous steaks with arsenic. And people are falling for it left and right.

I think I mentioned in our last taping, I had a fellow call and he was following this kind of stuff. And I said, "Man, you’re being ‘pied-pipered.’" And he didn’t know what I was talking about. But you all know the story of the pied piper. He piped and the rats followed to their doom. Well, that’s what’s happening today - these false teachers are up there, they’re piping the tune, and multitudes are following them. It’s unbelievable. Why? Because up there in verse 13, this is the reason,

II Corinthians 11:13

"For such are false apostles, (that’s what some of them claim to be, you know, that they’re apostles) deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ." They’re false teachers, and we’re going to be looking at that more in the next taping when we get to II Peter chapter 3, which is almost word-for-word with the little book of Jude - and it just lays out the descriptive language of these false teachers. A good yardstick for us in the Body of Christ is to line it all up against the Apostle Paul’s teachings of Romans through Philemon and you can’t go wrong. Look at verse 14 one more time, because this is so important.
II Corinthians 11:14

"And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light." Because that’s what Satan, and his ministers do all the time - he transforms himself into an angel of light. So that’s what we’re up against. Peter’s followers back here in the little epistle are up against a lion "seeking whom he may devour." Now, of course, we can use both analogies and hopefully I’ve made my point. The lion aspect is relatively easy to recognize. You know you’re in trouble when a lion confronts you, but when an angelic light appears, people fall for it. They just fall for it because, if it’s a light, it must be God. No. It’s a false angel of light. All right, back in I Peter 5.

I Peter 5:9

"Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world." In other words, we all are confronted with these same things.

I Peter 5:10-11

"But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. 11. To him (that is to Christ) be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." Now he’s winding down the letter and he says:

I Peter 5:12

"By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you, as I suppose, I have written briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand." Now, remember, Grace did not start with Paul. Paul becomes the more eminent Apostle of Grace, but God has always dealt in Grace. When He saved Adam and Eve, it was in Grace. When He helped Noah escape the flood, it was Grace. When He brought Israel out of Egypt, it was Grace. So that’s nothing new. The only thing is that, it is so much more epitomized when we get to Paul, that God can pour out His Grace on ungodly, unregenerate Gentiles. And that was hard to comprehend for the Jews. Now closing with verse 13.

I Peter 5:13-14

"The church that is at Babylon, (I think the Babylon here is Jerusalem and not Iraq). elected together with you. saluteth you; and so doth Marcus my son. 14. Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity, (love) Peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus. Amen.
Lesson Two • Part I

The Believer’s Virtue

II Peter 1:1 – 2:8

Okay, now we’re beginning in II Peter and ready to start with verse 1. And I want again to emphasize that, except for Paul’s epistles, all of Scripture is on a straight timeline - things just unfolding the way the Old Testament said it would - with everything looking forward to the day when Christ would set up His kingdom here on earth (after the 7 years of Tribulation has run it’s course). And so all these writers of the Jewish economy, the Kingdom Gospel, are looking at all this to come in their lifetime.

So go back for a second to James, so that you get what I’m driving at - that all of these writers - James and Peter and John and Jude and even the writer of the Revelation - are still writing on the same basis of the Old Testament prophecies, Christ’s earthly ministry and Peter and the Eleven in the book of Acts. And now they’re looking for the horrors of the Tribulation that they feel are right out in front of them - which, of course, will be fulfilled to a certain degree with the 70 AD invasion of Titus (but that wasn’t the Tribulation that is still future). So to give you an inkling of what I’m talking about, James 1:1, and take note to whom is he writing?

James 1:1b

"...to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting." And remember that, because of Saul of Tarsus’ tremendous persecution, what happened to that Jerusalem congregation? They scattered for fear of their lives, and they took up residence in other parts of that part of the world, the Roman Empire. All right, turn again to I Peter, and the language is almost the same.

I Peter 1:1

"Peter an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia." So Peter was writing to "strangers that had been scattered." Not to the citizens of Rome and Athens, but to the strangers who were scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia and so on and so forth. Those are Jews who had been scared away from Jerusalem because of the awful persecution of Saul. All right, now then, when you come into II Peter the language doesn’t change all that much.

II Peter 1:1a
"Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us..." Now, when and where did Peter attain his faith that Jesus was the promised Messiah? Way back there at Galilee when he was at his fishing nets and the Lord walked by and said, ‘Follow me.’ Well, Peter’s faith began with Christ’s earthly ministry.

And the same way here - he’s writing to those people who had been connected with Christ’s earthly ministry (they, as yet, know nothing of Paul’s Gospel of Grace. They are still under what we call the Kingdom economy). And you can just follow this on through into I John. I just thought of this on the way up, "How can I review this and make the point that these little epistles are still connected to the Jews of Christ’s earthly ministry?" All right, so even I John chapter 1 verse 1,

I John 1:1

"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;" Now what’s John referring to? Christ’s earthly ministry. When they actually saw Him and they were with Him and they, you might say, handled Him and so forth. All an extension now of Christ’s earthly ministry. Well, you can come right on in to II or III John saying basically the same thing, but now look at Jude just so I make my point. I want you to see how all of this ties straight back to Christ’s earthly ministry and His Gospel of the Kingdom, and that it was directed to the Jew only.

Jude 1:1a

"Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James,..." Who was James? He was part and parcel of Israel. See? And so he’s tying himself to the Twelve. Well, we certainly know that Revelation is all Jewish. I was reading a commentary written in 1890 and it just thrilled my heart! That old fellow said the same thing I’ve been saying for the last 20 years. All of these things are Jewish. These are all Jewish epistles. The book of Revelation is all Jewish. There’s nothing of Gentiles except as they come under being associated with Israel. But the books and these little epistles are all written to the Jewish people. And, unknown to them of course, God has set aside the Apostle Paul with the revelation of the mysteries. One of these mysteries was the out-calling of the Gentile Body of Christ, the Church Age, which has been going on now nearly 2,000 years.

All right, now according to the Old Testament promises coming out of the Old Testament, we have in order; Christ’s earthly ministry, His rejection, His resurrection and His ascension back to Glory. Then Peter starts proclaiming in Acts chapter 2 that
the One they crucified was the Christ and if they would repent of having rejected their Messiah then in chapter 3 verse 20 what does he say? "God will send Jesus Christ." Why? "To yet fulfill the promises of the Old Testament."

And so everything stays on that top timeline in their correct order. And so here we come through the book of Acts, and these believing Jews are looking at these seven years of Tribulation that they know are just out in front of them, but they have no idea that it’s going to be pushed out into the future, now for nearly 2,000 years. Now the Lord knew, but remember, He was God! He’s the author of The Book. He knew that this was all going to be postponed, but Peter didn’t. In Acts chapter 2 Peter quotes Joel and he takes you right on through the Tribulation to the Second Coming and the Kingdom Age, with no interruption. Peter had no idea that this top timeline was going to be interrupted.

And so, always remember, these things that we have now had 1,900-and-some years of this Age of Grace, which came about through the revelations of the mysteries that were revealed to the Apostle Paul. And that of course is why I emphasize Paul’s writings are for us today. Romans 11:13 tells us "he is the apostle to the Gentiles." So that is where we should be getting all of our doctrine and instructions for salvation, and how to live a fruitful life for our Lord. All the rest of Scripture was written to the Nation of Israel, and they were still under the Law of Moses. Why would anyone miss Heaven by trying to follow instructions that were never intended for the Gentile Body of Christ is beyond me.

And so keep all these things in mind now as we move on into II Peter chapter 1 verse 1. He’s still writing to the same people he wrote to in his first letter (they’re still under the Law of Moses), but he’s writing probably about 10 years later. II Peter is written just shortly before he’ll be martyred. He makes mention of it down here in verse 14, that he will shortly be facing his demise. I have said it over and over that I feel that Peter and Paul were both martyred probably within a matter of days or weeks because both of them speak now at the end of their earthly sojourn. I might as well cover my tracks with Scripture, so we’ll go ahead and look at it.

II Peter 1:14a

"Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle,..." Now the tabernacle is a reference to Peter’s human body, this is his temporary tent. All right, now I said that Paul was, no doubt, martyred at about the same time, so let look at that again, so back up if you will to II Timothy chapter 4. Almost identical language with Peter and I think almost the identical time frame. While Paul is being readied for his martyrdom in Rome, I think Peter is being readied for his martyrdom wherever he was. I think Jerusalem. I may be wrong. But he says, "Babylon;" but I think the Babylon that’s
he’s speaking of is Jerusalem as it is referred to in a couple of other places. Here Paul has the end in sight.

**II Timothy 4:6**

"For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is (what?) at hand." And he’s speaking of his physical death. And so, both of these gentlemen now, Paul and Peter, come to the end of their ministry in the latter part of the 60’s AD and then, shortly after Paul and Peter are gone, in comes the Roman invasion under Titus in 70 AD; and Jerusalem and the Temple are destroyed and the Jews are then scattered into the dispersion that has lasted up until our own time. Now let’s begin II Peter.

**II Peter 1:1**

"Simon Peter, a servant, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us, through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:" All right, let’s compare Scripture with Scripture. Here Peter is claiming to be an apostle of Jesus Christ, by inspiration. Now let’s back up to Galatians chapter 2 where, from the pen of the Apostle Paul, we see it defined a little finer. Galatians chapter 2 dropping in at verse 7 and 8. And I know when people hear and see me delineate these verses it shakes them up. They really don’t want to believe it and yet they can’t argue with the Scripture because there’s no gobbledy gook language here. You don’t have to be a rocket scientist to understand this; it’s plain English. Here Paul is writing.

**Galatians 2:7**

"But contrariwise, (or on the other hand) when they (the Twelve, with whom he had come to settle these arguments) saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision, (the Gospel of the Gentile) was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision (the Gospel of the Jew or the Gospel of the Kingdom) was unto Peter;" Now that’s plain language. You have two totally different economies. The Gospel of the uncircumcision (the Gentile world), was committed unto Paul; the Gospel of the Jew was committed unto Peter. All right, but now look at the next verse.

**Galatians 2:8**

"(For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of (whom? The Jews.) the circumcision, (see how plain that is. Peter was an apostle of the circumcision.) the same was mighty in me (by declaring the Apostle Paul, of course, an apostle) toward the Gentiles:" Now let’s back that up with Scripture. Keep your
hand in Galatians; I’m not through here. Come back with me to Romans chapter 11, because unless you see these things in black and white, it may be a little hard to swallow. But here it is, just as plain as language can make it.

**Romans 11:13a**

"For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles,..." See how plain that is? He wasn’t an apostle of Israel. He was an apostle of the Gentiles. Peter and the Eleven were apostles of Israel, two totally different apostleships. Same God! That’s why I was going to make the point here when we get back to II Peter that, even though these things are written primarily to Jewish believers, that doesn’t mean that we ignore it. That doesn’t mean you take it out of your Bible and throw it away. It’s applicable. We can learn because we’re dealing with the same God and God doesn’t differentiate in His righteousness, in His reaction with you and I as Gentiles, and the Jew. In that respect He’s the same. But, on the other hand, by the responsibilities, the directions He gives them for fulfilling their dispensation – yes, it’s different than what he gives us. All right, so now back to Galatians 2 for a moment.

**Galatians 2:9**

"And when James, Cephas, (Peter) and John, who seemed to be pillars, (that is of that Jerusalem church) perceived (or understood) the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we (Paul and Barnabas) should go unto the heathen, (the Gentiles) and they (James, Peter and John and the rest of the Twelve) unto the circumcision (to Israel.)"

Turn again to II Peter verse 2. So we’ve established that indeed Peter is an apostle of Israel as Paul is the apostle of the Gentile - but it’s the same God. And so we can certainly glean things in here that are for our benefit.

**II Peter 1:2-3a**

"Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord. 3. According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness;..." Does that sound much different than Paul? No. Turn to Titus, because I want people to see that this Book fits hand in glove even though you may have Peter addressing Jews and Paul addressing Gentiles, but God’s the same. All right, Titus chapter 2. Now this is Paul writing to you and I. Almost the same thing that Peter wrote to his Jewish believers.

**Titus 2:11**
"For the grace of God (see, just like Peter said about grace and knowledge, Paul says the same thing) that bringeth salvation hath (past tense) appeared to all men. (now here it comes) 12. Teaching us (this is what we’re supposed to know) that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;"Does that sound much different than Peter? No. Practically the same language, and so, for the believer of any dispensation, these are the things that God is looking for. Now back to II Peter and let’s read the last part of verse 3.

II Peter 1:3b-4

"...through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: (being good) 4. Whereby are given unto 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." Now wait a minute. Just stop and think what they’ve uncovered the last few weeks in Iraq (May, 2003). What did that tell you? Corruption upon corruption. Those palaces showed more human corruption and immorality than people could even imagine. But you know what, it isn’t limited to Baghdad. It’s not limited to Iraq - that’s the world in general. Right here in our own beloved nation. My, whenever I read of the political corruption, I have to be amazed that we have survived as a republic as long as we have. The corruption is just beyond human understanding. Not just sexual. It can be financial. It can be in every category of society. Corruption abounds. See? Well, we’re not to be part and parcel of that. We’re to be above the corruption that is in the world through lust.

What did Paul say was the number one commandment? Thou shalt not covet! Well, what’s the difference between coveting and lusting? Almost nothing. And so what prompts all this corruption? What prompts an embezzler? What prompts the person who starts getting crooked? Coveting. Coveting. I don’t care whether it’s Enron or WorldCom or whatever, it’s all the same thing, see? Back to chapter 1 verse 5.

II Peter 1:5

"And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;" What is always paramount? Faith! "Without faith you cannot please God." Everything in our relationship with God has to start on that bedrock word – Faith. Without faith you don’t stand a snowball’s chance of making it. But with faith then everything begins to fall in place, see? All right, and so by faith, as we feed on the Word of God, it’s going to bring us to a place of virtue.

II Peter 1:6
"And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;" That’s a small ‘g’ – that doesn’t mean we become gods. It merely means we pertain to a life that is after God’s design.

II Peter 1:7-8a

"And to godliness brotherly kindness; (or love) and to brotherly kindness (indeed) charity. (which is love) 8. For if these things be in you, and abound,..." Now who is Peter writing to? Believers. Believers in the midst of even the Jewish community of unbelief. Even a lot of the fellow Jews who were neighbors and friends of these believers hated them and persecuted them - made life miserable for them. And we’re under the same circumstances. That part isn’t any different, but see, this is who Peter’s writing to. He’s writing to believing Jews who are being persecuted by their own fellow unbelieving Jews as well as the pagan Romans and then between that vice (not sinful vice, the squeezing vice! A shop vice.) In between that vice are these believers being constantly squeezed, see? And so Peter is admonishing them not to give in to these pressures. Verse 8 again.

II Peter 1:8

"For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." Now there’s another word that Paul is always using. Let’s back up to that one. Come back with me to Ephesians chapter 3 - and then go on ahead to Colossians chapter 1 where he mentions the same thing again, which means it’s important that we have knowledge! Now this is Paul’s prayer on behalf of Gentile believers. And he says:

Ephesians 3:17-19

"That Christ may dwell in your hearts (how?) by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, 18. May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; (which is four dimensions and we live in a world of three.) 19. And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." Which includes knowledge. Now turn to Colossians chapter 1 and he makes it a little plainer probably than in Ephesians. Here is one of the Apostle’s prayers on behalf of you and I as believers.

Colossians 1:10a

"That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all (even the unsaved world) pleasing,..." In other words, God doesn’t expect us to be a bunch of kooks that the world can just ridicule because we’re oddballs. No, we are to be so rooted in
our Christian faith that, even though the world may not love us, they’ll have to respect us for what we are. They have to look at us and admit that they wish that they could be as we are. So Paul is praying that we might be just good solid testimonies of God’s grace.

Colossians 1:10b

"...being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;" We’re not just saved to sit. We are saved to serve and we’re going to serve by increasing in our knowledge. And how do you increase in knowledge? Prayer and Bible Study. And oh it’s so lacking. But get into the Book and learn and pray and grow.
Lesson Two • Part II

The Believer’s Virtue

II Peter 1:1 – 2:8

We’d like to thank you for joining with us today as we continue on with our study of II Peter. In the last lesson we got all the way through verse 8, so jump in at verse 9.

II Peter 1:9

"But he that lacketh these things (in other words, all these good things that are part and parcel of godly living) is blind, (that is spiritually blind) and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins." In other words, Peter is talking to believers who have been less than spiritual and, of course, Paul deals with the same thing. And so Peter is admonishing these believers to shape up and realize that, without actually walking the Christian walk, it’s awfully easy to fall back into those old habits. All right, verse 10.

II Peter 1:10

"Wherefore the rather, (or on the other hand) brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:"

Now Peter is not ascribing their salvation to doing these good things. Let’s go back and look at them. It was in the last program. Look at them in verses 5, 6, 7. These are the things he’s talking about. Don’t neglect these things because these are the manifestation of your saving faith. And Paul would say the same thing to us.

II Peter 1:5-7

"And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; 6. And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; 7. And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity." (or love.) See, all these things are part and parcel of the godly walk. Now let’s just, again for sake of comparison, come back to how Paul puts it in Galatians. Galatians chapter 5 and this is when you can see that both of these men are writing by the inspiration of the same Holy Spirit. They’re both writing Scripture. They’re both admonishing believers. But, Paul is writing to us Gentiles in this Age of Grace, whereas Peter is still addressing Jews who are, as yet, unaware of Paul’s Gospel of salvation, and they’re still associated with Gospel of the Kingdom, Christ’s earthly ministry, the believers of Pentecost of Acts chapter 2, and the Jewish economy
in general. **Here is how Paul addresses us in the Gentile Body of Christ.** Let’s jump in at verse 16.

**Galatians 5:16**

"This I say then, **Walk in the Spirit,** (in other words, walk in the control of the Holy Spirit) and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." You see, it’s almost the exact language. Now verse 17.

**Galatians 5:17**

"For the flesh (the old Adamic Nature) **lusteth** (or warreth) against the Spirit, (and His admonishing) and the Spirit (on the other hand is going to war) against (the Old Adam) **the flesh: and these** (these two natures) are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." (without having a fight). There’s always that constant battle. Now, Paul lists all the things that Peter is warning his followers to avoid, although Peter doesn’t delineate them quite as clearly as Paul does. Here Paul tells us to avoid the following:

**Galatians 5:19-21**

"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness. (all the sexual immorality sins; and then comes all the things of the mind) 20. Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditious heresies. 21. (then you go into the grosser aspect) Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." But then in verse 22 you have the flipside of all of that.

**Galatians 5:22-23a**

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23. Meekness, temperance:...."

Those are almost the same words that Peter uses. Almost the same language but under two totally different economies. All right, now then, back to II Peter again and pick up how he is admonishing his followers (Jewish believers), I think still in the Kingdom economy. They’re not members of the Body of Christ; they are worshipping in synagogues as we saw back in James. All right, now then, back into II Peter chapter 1 verse 11.

**II Peter 1:11**
"For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Now remember Peter is not referring to the kingdom in a post-resurrection like we’re looking for it. Peter was looking for this same earthy kingdom to still come down in their lifetime, if they could survive the horrors of the Tribulation that was coming (and then they would go into the Kingdom and they would enjoy all the blessings and the ramifications of it).

Now of course, we in this Age of Grace, are now coming to the end of 1,900-and-some years since Paul began this economy. We’re not looking to go into the Tribulation - we’re looking for the escape from it as Paul promises the Gentile Body of Christ. And then after receiving our new body, we will become part and parcel, to a degree, of that glorious kingdom that is still coming. And always remember it’s an earthly kingdom. It’s going to be heaven on this earth and Christ is going to rule from Jerusalem. But of course, Peter and his followers (as I’ve said over and over these last several months), thought this was all going to happen in their lifetime.

Now verse 12, and Peter is going to begin with "Wherefore." And never forget, it’s the Holy Spirit moving him to write every word.

**II Peter 1:12**

"Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth." In other words, what they’ve had revealed to them. Now I imagine I should qualify when I keep talking about "these are Gospel of the Kingdom believers." Come back with me all the way to Matthew. Been a long time since we’ve done it on the program. We did in some of our seminars in Ohio and Indiana last week, but let’s come back to Matthew chapter 9, so that you’ll see where I pick up my terminology, some of the words that I use over and over. Here in Matthew chapter 9, Christ is just beginning His earthly ministry. And let’s begin with verse 35.

**Matthew 9:35a**

"And Jesus went about all the cities and villages,..." (that is in the land of Israel.) Always remember He never went outside the borders of Israel. Even Tyre and Sidon, the cities that were Gentile on the coast of the Mediterranean, He didn’t enter into them. He only went as far as the city limits. He never went into Gentile territory. (Matthew 10:5-6)

**Matthew 9:35b**
"…teaching in their synagogues, (see that? Not their churches, their synagogues) and preaching the gospel of the kingdom,…"

Not the Gospel of the Grace of God, but rather the Gospel of the Kingdom. Two totally different entities. Two totally different economies. This is still under the Law. This is to Israel and Jew only, and now He’s preaching the Good News of the Kingdom. Well, what’s the Good News of the Kingdom? **It’s coming! It’s coming within their lifetime, it’s at hand.**

*Matthew 9:35c*

"...healing every sickness and every disease among the people."

All right, now then come over to chapter 16 and here’s where we can put feet to that Gospel of the Kingdom by Peter’s confession. Matthew 16. And I can’t repeat it often enough, because over and over someone will come up and say, "Well now, what’s the difference again between the Gospel of the Kingdom and the Gospel of Grace?" Well, the Gospel of the Kingdom is what Jesus and the Twelve preached to the Jews in view of their coming King and Kingdom. **And the basis of their Faith was to believe that Jesus was that promised King. Just that simple. They were to believe Who He was.**

And that doesn’t change all through Peter’s ministry. **Never** does Peter say, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ that He died for your sins and that He was buried and was risen from the dead." Peter never preaches that. That’s Paul’s Gospel of salvation, so Peter’s confession of faith carries all the way through on these Jewish believers. This is what they had believed.

*Matthew 16:13a*

"*When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi,...*" Remember that’s up in northern Israel, headwaters of the Jordan River. And it’s at the end, now, of His three years - not at the beginning like we just read. This is three years later.

*Matthew 16:13b-16*

"...he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? (and look what they said. Here was Israel’s unbelief again) 14. And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist:, some Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets. 15. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? 16. And Simon Peter answered and said, (here was his profession of faith) Thou art the
Christ, (you’re the Messiah, you’re the Promised One) the Son of the living God."

Period!

Not a word about the cross, not a word about resurrection. Not a word about shed blood. But rather "Thou art the Christ." Now I wish people could see that. That was the Good News of the Kingdom. This is what those Jews were to believe – Who He was. Now let me give you a good example. It’s been a long time since we’ve spent any time in Acts. Stop in Acts chapter 3 and this is more good evidence of the same concept. This is where Peter has healed the lame man and the Jewish leaders are all concerned and upset. How did you do this? They couldn’t remember seven weeks earlier - Jesus was doing it all the time? But just because a few weeks had elapsed and now Peter, James and John can raise him, they’re all amazed and wondering, see? Let’s begin with verse 12.

Acts 3:12-15

"And when Peter saw it, (that is to the wondering and amazement of the Jewish people over the healing of the lame man) he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, (see how Jewish this is, there’s no Gentiles in that statement) why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness, we made this man to walk? 13. The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. 14. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murder to be granted unto you; 15. And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses." Now here it comes, that same profession of faith that we just saw in Matthew 16. And this is what Peter is asking of his Jewish listeners.

Acts 3:16a

"And his name (the name of Jesus of Nazareth) through faith in his name...." Not in His death, burial and resurrection, but rather in His Name. They were simply to believe that Jesus was the Christ. That was the Gospel of the Kingdom. Now the Gospel of the Grace of God in Church Age, of course, is I Corinthians 15: 1-4. Maybe we’d better look at that. Jerry never gets tired of telling me, "Hey it’s been a while since you shared that beautiful Gospel of salvation."

So let’s just stop at it. And I want you to see the difference. What a difference! Same God. Same Holy Spirit is inspiring it, but yet, here we have this difference of what we’re to believe as Gentiles and what the Jews were to believe as the children of Abraham. I Corinthians chapter 15, the first four verses. Now this is the Gospel of the Grace of God. Now there aren’t two Gospels of salvation today
there’s only one, and this is what you must believe in your heart for salvation. Today there’s only one. You can’t use the Gospel of the Kingdom that Jesus and Peter used. By inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Paul tells us we must use his Gospel.

I Corinthians 15:1-4

"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; 2. By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. (now here comes Paul’s Gospel of salvation) For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; 4. And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:"

Now that’s what we’re to believe today. Now for comparison back up once again to Acts chapter 3, I want you to see this! Acts chapter 3 again verse 16, now this is the only way we can learn. Compare Scripture with Scripture. You can’t mix them all up. You can’t just put it in a blender, turn it up on high and ladle it out without people getting sick to their stomach because it’s a whole ‘duke’s mixture’ that doesn’t fit. You’ve got to rightly divide the Word of God. Remember Paul’s letters are to us in the Body of Christ: the rest of Scripture is for our learning, but not doctrine - they were written to the Nation of Israel.

All right, so Paul says that we’re saved by believing in our hearts that Jesus died for our sins, He was buried and He rose from the dead. Peter says this man was made whole because he believed:

Acts 3:16a

"And his name through faith in his name...." Not through what He had done, but Who He was. Well, it’s exactly what Peter professed in Matthew 16, "Thou art the Christ. You’re the Promised Messiah." Not a word about what He would do for them. But Who He was. All right, now I hope I’ve made my point.

You know, as I was coming up, I couldn’t help but think that, if the Lord has given me this opportunity to teach (and that’s what I feel He has. I’m not an evangelist, I’m not a preacher, but He has given me this opportunity to teach), then it becomes my responsibility to teach in such a way that the simplest of the simple can understand it. And that’s what I try to do and that’s why I repeat and repeat. And as I was driving up, I got to thinking - I hadn’t been on television too many years and a retired English teacher from Tulsa wrote me a nice little note and commended me for
not butchering the king’s English. In other words, she commended me for my good English. Well, I wrote right back and I said, "I have to give all the credit for whatever I can do with the English language to my high school English teacher up in Iowa." Well, she wrote right back, and said, "Have you ever thanked her for it?" No! I hadn’t. It never dawned on me.

So a few months later we were on our way up to one of our Minnesota seminars and we pulled through that little town in northern Iowa and lo and behold, she was still alive, and I was kind of surprised. She said, "Les! I wasn’t that old when you were in high school!" And you know what we all know? When you’re a kid fourteen, fifteen years old, someone who’s thirty is over the hill! Isn’t that right? And so I guess that was about our age difference, if that. So, anyhow, she was very spry and alert and she was in her own apartment and so Iris and I stopped by to visit with her.

And I said, "Now you know the reason I stopped by is to thank you – thank you for teaching me English." I had her for four years. And then she shared this with me and that is why I’m bringing it in here. I’m remembering it even as I teach Scripture. She said, "You know Les, when I first got to college, I had intended to become a Mathematics teacher because I loved math and it was so easy for me. But she said, "My counselor said, ‘No, you don’t want to teach a subject that’s easy for you; you’ll never be a good teacher.’" And doesn’t that make sense? The counselor said, "Instead, choose a field that you don’t like and that is hard for you." "Well," she said, "that would have to be English." And so she said, "That’s why I went into teaching English."

Well, I’ll tell you, she was a master teacher of English. And she could make it interesting, and she could teach it in such a way that it just stuck with me. Oh, I make an occasional error, I don’t claim to be perfect - but I think, for the most part, I have to admit that she taught me quite well. All right, now I’m going to bring that same thing into my teaching of the Scripture. I want to make it as interesting as I can. I want to make it so plain that anybody can understand it. And that’s why I will come back and forth and repeat and repeat because that’s what teaching demands. I’m not just here to preach at you for a half-an-hour and then let you go. We want you to be able to understand so that you, as Paul says, can do what? "Teach others also."

In fact, I think maybe we’re reaching a lot more people through our television audience teaching others than are actually hearing me. And so this is the reason we do these things. All right, back to II Peter if I may, and reading on now verse 12.

II Peter 1:12-13a
"Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. (that is knowing Who Jesus of Nazareth was with regard to Israel) 13. Yea, I think it meet, (I think it’s appropriate) as long as I am in this tabernacle,…" Well now what’s the other word for tabernacle? Tent. And what’s the purpose of a tent? Temporary. So what’s he referring to? This body of flesh. It’s temporary, it’s not permanent. It’s only here for a little while. Paul used the same term in II Corinthians 5, when he said, "and when this earthly tabernacle (this temporary tent) is laid aside." Now finishing verse 13.

II Peter 1:13b-14

"...to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; 14. Knowing that shortly (now this is where Peter suddenly realizes that he is not going to live to see the Tribulation and the Kingdom, he’s going to face martyrdom) I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me." Now you know what I have to think? Come back with me to John’s Gospel, chapter 21, and let’s begin down there at verse 18. You know I’ve thought of this over the years. It would almost seem as though Peter forgot all about this for many, many years. It just never entered his mind until he is closing his second epistle. Now I’m guessing, but it would just almost seem that way.

All right, now here, this is just after the three times when Jesus asked him, "Do you love Me? Feed My sheep." We referred to that a few programs back and Peter was always faithful that he fed the sheep of God’s pasture, which are Israel. That’s why he made the agreement in Galatians chapter 2, when he was glad enough to shake hands with Paul and say, "I will stay with Israel, you go to the Gentiles."

All right, now look what the Lord Jesus told him after he had just said in verse 17, "Feed my sheep." Then verse 18 and you would think it would have haunted Peter all his days, but I don’t believe it did. I believe he just almost forgot about it.

John 21:18

"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not."

What was Jesus foretelling? Peter’s death by crucifixion. Now church legend has it (we can’t prove it from Scripture) that he refused to be crucified as his Lord was, so they crucified him upside-down, which I think would have been horrible. But nevertheless, this is what he suddenly remembers now in II Peter chapter 1 when he
says that he is now ready to leave this earthly tabernacle, remembering what the Lord had said. All right, II Peter 1:15:

**II Peter 1:15-16**

"Moreover I will endeavor that ye may be able after my decease (see he knows he’s going to die) to have these things always in remembrance. 16. For we, (he and the other apostles) have not followed cunningly devised fables, (or stories or legends) when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty."

In other words, Peter says, we’re not kidding. Christ is coming. He’s still going to set up His Earthly Kingdom, even though Peter’s pretty sure he’s not going to live to see it now. But he says, that doesn’t mean it’s not going to happen. Now, let’s come all the way back to Acts chapter 1. This is why I think Peter must have almost forgotten immediately what the Lord said about his demise. I just can’t see him remembering it until you get to II Peter. Acts chapter 1 verse 6. And this is just after the forty days after the resurrection, and He’s ready to ascend back to Glory from the Mount of Olives and He’s meeting there on the mountain with the Eleven. And verse 6, this is Peter speaking.

**Acts 1:6**

"When they therefore were come together, they asked of him saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" Oh now don’t forget, they had remembered that they were going to rule the Twelve Tribes from the twelve thrones in Jerusalem. And whenever I use this verse I always point out - listen, the Lord didn’t ridicule him for talking about an earthly kingdom. The Lord didn’t say, "Peter where did you ever get such an idea?" But oh, the Lord said:

**Acts 1:7a**

"And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons,...."
Lesson Two • Part III

The Believer’s Virtue

II Peter 1:1 – 2:8

All right, now we finished verse 15 of chapter 1 of II Peter in the last lesson, so we’re ready for verse 16. And here’s a verse that we can just take to heart for ourselves. Just as true for us as it was for these Jews, where Peter says:

II Peter 1:16a

"For we have not followed cunningly devised fables,..." Now you know that’s what the scoffer claims the Bible is. Well, how can anybody be so foolish when we know that this Book is so intricately put together. **Intricately! It all fits.** And then they try to tell us that it was all concocted around the campfires of antiquity and some of these foolish statements. But Peter hits the nail on the head.

II Peter 1:16

"For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty."

Lest you think I’ve been stretching the envelope when I’ve been stressing all the time that these little epistles are looking forward to the coming of Christ again - now remember He’s been crucified, He’s ascended back to Glory - and, during these writings, we’re in those years just after that. **And so they know there are seven years of Tribulation that are ahead of them, and then He’s going to return and yet set up the Kingdom, which we would call now the Second Coming.** But turn with me to the little book of Jude. Only one chapter, verse 14. And I find it to be an interesting verse. Remember Jude is in the same category as Peter, James and John. And he writes:

Jude 1:14

"And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints," Well what was that? That’s a reference to His Second Coming and it’s what Peter is referring to that He’s going to be coming with power and glory.
All right, so that’s what Peter is referring to as we read in verse 16. "For we’ve made known to you the power and the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." They know that He’s coming. Even though Peter has now realized that he probably won’t live to see it because he’s going to be martyred. But for these people to whom he’s writing, they can still expect everything to happen in their lifetime. All right, reading on in verse 16:

**II Peter 1:16b**

"...but were eyewitnesses of his majesty." They got a glimpse of what He’s going to be like when He returns. Just a glimpse. Because, after all, you want to remember that when Christ came at His first coming, He didn’t lay aside His Deity. He didn’t lay aside any of His righteousness or His holiness. But He did lay aside his glory. He did not walk up and down the dusty roads of Israel, shining brighter than the noonday sun. But, Peter, James and John did get a glimpse of it at the transfiguration and, of course, that’s back in Matthew chapter 17.

We looked at it briefly a couple of tapings ago, I think, but this is what Peter is referring to in his letter when he says that "we saw a glimpse of his majesty." So let’s look at it again. Remember this is in His earthly ministry.

**Matthew 16:28**

"Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, (and of course He’s referring to the Twelve) which shall not taste of death, till they see physically the Son of man coming in his kingdom." Now that threw a curve at them, didn’t it? That there would be some of them who would not die until they would see the coming of the kingdom. Now drop down into chapter 17 and we get what He was talking about.

**Matthew 17:1-2a**

"And after six days, Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, (that would be one of the mountains of Israel) 2. And was transfigured before them: (He was just immediately changed from His common physical appearance to His Glorious) and his face did shine as the sun,..." Now that’s not a stretch on words, that was just a glimpse of His glory. That was just a glimpse of His power.

**Matthew 17:2b-3**

"...and his raiment was white as the light. 3. And behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him." Well, this is what Peter is making reference to,
that he and James and John had the privilege of just getting this glimpse of a preview of the glory that is yet to follow. All right, so back to II Peter chapter 1 and verse 17.

**II Peter 1:17**

"For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, (And what did the voice say?) This is my beloved Son in whom I am (what?) well pleased." My goodness what an experience! Does anyone remember where else that happened? At His baptism. The same identical thing, when the voice from Heaven said, word for word, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Now verse 18.

**II Peter 1:18**

"And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount." Quite an experience! See we live by faith, don’t we? We live by faith, not by sight. But see, over and over throughout Israel’s history, quite a few Jews saw God in one way or another. We know Abraham did. We know Moses did. And Elijah probably did. And so various of the patriarchs saw God in human form back there. And then, of course, at His baptism, when they heard those words. But at the transfiguration, that was something I think that was so mind-boggling that Peter, James and John probably took a long time getting over it.

Now verse 19 is a verse that I’ve always really hung on to. As great as that experience was (and that was exhilarating. That was proof that this Jesus of Nazareth was Who He claimed to be, when He was transfigured right there before them and heard the voice from Heaven on top of all that. But), look at the next verse:

**II Peter 1:19a**

"We have also a more sure..." Now what does that tell you? Do we have to have exhilarating experiences like the transfiguration to believe? No. We can take all this by faith, we don’t have to have sight. We don’t have to have experiences. We take it by faith. And that’s why I think in this Age of Grace we have so little of the supernatural, if any, because now God has given us the Word of God and He expects us to believe it. And that’s why it’s going to be so awful for people of unbelief because all He’s expected the human race to do is to believe what He’s said - and when they refused to believe, it’s almost a slap in the face, as it were, and telling Him, "But I don’t believe it."

All right, now look at this next verse - even as great as that transfiguration experience was, Peter can yet say, again by inspiration, never forget this.
II Peter 1:19

"We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:" Well now Who’s the Day Star? The Lord Jesus Christ. And how does He arise in our hearts? By faith! We take it all by faith and He becomes real to us. He’s with us moment by moment.

Now, once in a while things will happen to families and I can appreciate when they begin to wonder, "Where is God’s grace?" when just one horrible thing after another can happen. And that’s a human reaction. But on the other hand, we have to come right back and claim the promises of God that are sure - that, in spite of whatever may happen, He’s aware of us. He knows. And He’s with us and He’ll never leave us nor forsake us. All right, and so He is already in our walk of faith; He is the Day Star that has already arisen in our hearts. Now verse 20. Here is that which is more sure than even the proof of His transfiguration.

II Peter 1:20

"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation." Or a better translation I think is, of "human origin." We can look at this Book and it is more of a manifestation of Who God is and what He has done and what He is to us, than the transfiguration was to Peter, James and John. Now I know that’s a strong statement. But listen, this Book is so refined. It is so intricately put together that we never have to doubt it. And it just proves itself precept upon precept. And even though the scoffers may scream and ridicule it, yet, we who see the intricacy of it, we know it is the Word of God. And we know it’s true. And we know that everything it says is going to happen IS going to happen.

We don’t have to have any doubt whatsoever. And so I like to make that comparison. Yes, Peter, James and John saw Christ transfigured. They saw His Glory with their physical eyes. But we’ve got something that’s even more sure and that is the Word of God itself. Now that’s exhilarating! Isn’t it? All right, let’s go on. Looking at the first part of that verse again.

II Peter 1:20a

"Knowing this first, (and above everything) that no prophecy...." Now the word ‘prophecy’ here in the New Testament, usually does not mean telling the future, it means speaking forth. That’s why in I Corinthians 14, the greatest gift was prophecy, the giving of the gift to speak forth the Word of God before it was printed. Now, you all remember, I’m always emphasizing, there were about eighteen years from the time
that Paul began his ministry among the Gentiles until he writes his first epistle. So, for eighteen years, what did the early believers depend on? Gifted men who could speak forth the Word of God and that’s why it was the primary gift. And then verse 21 is the answer.

**II Peter 1:21**

"For the prophecy (or again the speaking forth) came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved (or carried along) by the Holy Ghost." And that’s the inspiration of Scripture. And you can pick it up all the way through the Book. I don’t ridicule very often, but when people will make foolish, stupid, statements like "Luke must have been a tremendous keeper of a diary or he could have never written any of the Four Gospels and the book of Acts." Now, to me, that is ridiculous. No writer of Scripture went back to notes in a diary. They didn’t write on what they had remembered. They didn’t write on the basis of hearsay. They wrote as the Holy Spirit funneled those thoughts through their minds. And they were moved – that’s the inspiration of the Scripture.

Otherwise, how in the world could Moses write about creation, which took place 2,500 years before? How in the world could Moses write about his own death, which was out in front of him? But he did. That’s the inspiration of the Scriptures. See? And the same way with all of the writings of Scripture. How could these men name King Cyrus 150 years before he was ever born? By inspiration. How could Daniel lay out so perfectly the coming Gentile empires, one after the other, long before they happened? By inspiration. And so it is throughout this whole Book, that which is still future, it is just as reliable as that which is past. So the Holy Spirit moved holy men to write the things that God wanted written and, of course, as Paul puts it in II Timothy:

**II Timothy 3:16**

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:"

All right, now then I guess we can go on into chapter 2, and verse 1, and the first word you see is "But." Now you know in the original there was no chapter break. But, horror of horrors, what has happened to the truth of the inspired Scriptures? Oh, it’s been attacked and underwritten and undermined, by what kind of people? False teachers.

**II Peter 2:1**
"But (even though the Scripture is true, even though holy men of God were moved by
the Spirit to write) there were false prophets also among the people, even as there
shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies,
even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift
destruction." Now this is Peter. Who else says the same thing? Paul. Paul is
constantly reminding his early converts "beware!" Beware. They’re coming! In fact
his greatest warning is in Galatians 1. Let’s go back and look at it. God has had to put
up with the Satanic attacks against Himself and His program and against His Word
since day one. And it’s inspired by the adversary – Satan.

All right, but now you’ve got Galatians chapter 1 verse 6 - my, we use this over and
over. But I don’t have to apologize for it because it is always apropos. Every day of
the week, you’ve got this kind of thing going on, even in the Christian community.

**Galatians 1:6**

"I marvel (he’s amazed) that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into
the grace of Christ. (that is through Paul’s preaching) unto another gospel:" Now
remember he’s writing to Gentiles who had just come out of paganism, idolatry and
all that was part of that. And now Paul has established his Gospel of Grace; for
them to believe that Jesus died for our sins, was buried, and rose again. And here
comes, immediately, the false teachers trying to undermine the Apostle’s teaching.
And they’re falling for it - and he said, "I’m amazed. you’re falling into another
gospel." Now verse 7.

**Galatians 1:7**

"Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, (it’s not something
totally different, but these false teachers have taken what I have brought you ) and
would pervert (or pollute) the gospel of Christ." They’ve added to Paul’s pure Gospel
of Salvation, just like many do today. But now look what Paul puts on these false
teachers.

**Galatians 1:8**

"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than
that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." In other words, in it’s
purity. And that’s what he called it in Corinthians. He said, "I didn’t come to you with
a false product, I came to you with the pure truth of the Gospel." And here he’s
reminding the Galatians of the same thing - that if you’re going to partake of anything
but the truth of Paul’s Gospel of salvation, then you’re going to be in trouble. And the
messengers that have perverted Paul’s message are going to be accursed. And in
verse 9, Paul repeats that warning. They’re under the anathema of God. False teachers. And oh the world is full of them. Always has been.

I was just talking with somebody on the phone last night and they had such a heartache (which reminded me of Paul and his heartache). So turn with me to II Timothy, chapter 1. What a heartbreaking statement; and again inspired by the Holy Spirit. And this is what Paul writes to Timothy in verse 15.

II Timothy 1:15a

"This thou knowest, that all they..." And I’m a stickler for words. I believe it was every one of them. I think that all of these believers that had become followers of the Apostle Paul had all turned against him and had followed the false teachers. Well, we’re seeing it today – wholesale. The further out in left field these guys get, the bigger the crowds. All right, completing the verse.

II Timothy 1:15-16

"This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia..." (now remember Asia is Asia Minor, that’s present day Turkey) be turned away from me; of whom are Phygelus, and Hermogenes. (of course, were the leaders) 16. The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain:"

But nevertheless, coming back to II Peter now, it’s always been this way. Let me remind you. How long was it after Abel had brought the right kind of a sacrifice and was accepted of God (Cain, on the other hand, brought the wrong sacrifice and was not accepted; which immediately put a wall of demarcation between those two young brothers, how long was it) until Satan intervened with the crime of murder? Not long. And Cain rose up and killed Abel. Well, who prompted Cain to kill Abel? Well, the Devil did, of course. And why? Because Satan thought that if he could get rid of that very first prodigy in the promises, that would end it all and he’d have the victory before it ever started.

Well, that’s the way it’s been all the way up through human history. As soon as God revealed something, Satan attacks it with everything he’s got. And that’s why I’m always reminding people everywhere I go, "Why in the world do you suppose Israel has always had so much opposition? The satanic power. Why do you suppose the world in general tonight would like to drive the Israelites into the sea and be rid of the problem? Satanic power. But it’s not going to happen because God is always victorious, He has always overcome."
All right, back to II Peter, chapter 2, and verse 1 again. Oh, the warning against false teachers. But in spite of the divine revelation of the writers of Scriptures:

**II Peter 2:1**

*But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily (or secretly. They’re not going to come out and get into a pulpit and say, hey - I’m going to lead you astray today. No. They come in secretly, underhandedly,) shall bring in damnable (or condemnational) heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction."* (they’re not going to get by with it)

**II Peter 2:2a**

"*And many (many, not a few - many - Paul said all. Peter says many) shall follow their pernicious ways;....*" Goodness sakes, if you know anything about medicine, you should know what the word ‘pernicious’ means. We’ve got a disease called what? Pernicious anemia. Well, what’s the disease pernicious anemia? It’s a disease that eats away the red blood cells; and that’s why, when someone gets anemic, they lose their color, because pernicious anemia is constantly chewing up and destroying the red blood cells. Well the word means the same thing here. **These false teachers are perniciously chewing up the truth so that it becomes useless.** Now finishing verse 2.

**II Peter 2:2b**

"*...by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.*" My goodness, if you read anything at all you know this is what we’re up against. I read it on every hand, that this is exactly what they’re doing with the truth. They’re chewing it up and spitting it aside. Now verse 3.

**II Peter 2:3a**

"*And through covetousness....*" Now we talked about coveting the last half-hour didn’t we? It just pops up in Scripture because it’s the number one sin of the human race. It’s the one that Paul said opened him up to his sinful state, that when the Law said, "*Thou shalt not covet," then Paul or Saul at that time suddenly realized that he was guilty, as guilty can be.
Lesson Two • Part IV

The Believer’s Virtue

II Peter 1:1 – 2:8

Let’s start where we left off in the last lesson, and that would be II Peter chapter 2 and verse 3. I think most of you probably realize that II Peter chapter 2 and the little book of Jude are almost word-for-word, so when we get to Jude we’ll probably be repeating a lot of this stuff. But it bears repeating as it is so apropos for the day in which we live, where false teaching is just coming in like a flood.

And of course, the Internet doesn’t help because you can get almost anything you want off the Internet. I think this is what’s happened to a lot of our preachers, bless their hearts. Instead of studying and preparing their sermon, they’re just taking the easy way out and clicking on the Internet. Well, that’s a sad commentary, but if you learn something wrong, then you’re going to pass it on wrong!

All right, it was no different back here when Peter and Paul were writing. As I’ve showed in the last half-hour, Paul complained in Timothy that everybody in Asia Minor had already turned against him. Why? Because the false teachers came in and came across with something that appealed to the flesh. All right, now Peter is up against the same thing with his Jewish believers; that, even among them, there would come these false teachers with their pernicious ways and who speak evil of the truth. Now verse 3.

II Peter 2:3a

"And through covetousness…” In other words, again like we said in our closing moments in the last program, coveting is the beginning of everything. I’ve always made the statement and I still say it, "You cannot break one of the Ten Commandments without coveting first." Because the foundation of all sin is coveting. Now verse 3 again.

II Peter 2:3a

"And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you:...." Now when you think of merchandise what do you think of? Money! So what are they really after? They’re after your material things. They’re after your money. And they’ll do it with their false teaching. They’ll cash in on you. That’s a good way of putting it, isn’t it? They’ll just cash in on you.
II Peter 2:3b

"...whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not." In other words, their eternal doom is awaiting them. Evidently they must never think of it, but it is. Their eternal doom is waiting for them. Now verse 4. Here are Peter’s reasons for saying what he said. God hasn’t changed. God still operates the way He always has. And when He gets to a point where He can take it no more, He drops His wrath and judgment. And it’s going to happen again. The world is getting ripe for a new judgment which, of course, we think will be the seven years of Tribulation. The world is getting ripe for it. Every day these false teachers completely undermine the truth; every day the fleshpots of this world are capitalizing on the human weaknesses; and someday soon God’s wrath is going to fall.

II Peter 2:4

"For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;" In other words, that started way back, I think, between verse 1 and verse 2 of Genesis. Which, in verse 1, you have the perfect creation. Let’s go back and look at it. My it’s been a long time since we’ve taught anything from Genesis, hasn’t it? Maybe it’s about time we refresh peoples’ memories.

Genesis chapter 1. I know that probably 50% of Christendom will disagree with me, but that’s their privilege. That doesn’t bother me a bit. I’ve always said I’m going to teach it the way I feel the Lord has opened it up to me. And I’m certainly not going to lead anybody into a lost eternity because of it.

Genesis 1:1

"In the beginning (before anything ever appeared) God created the heaven and the earth." Now the God of this Book is not a God that does anything less than perfect, is He? He makes it perfect and I think the Hebrew word "create" here, out of nothing, indicated something perfect. Without a flaw. And then all of a sudden in verse 2 something has happened because, all of a sudden, it’s not a perfect earth. In fact I call it a mess. It’s a swamp. It’s covered with water.

Genesis 1:2

"And the earth was without form, and (what?) void; (it was of no use) and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." In other words, the earth was covered with water. The sun and the moon and the stars had been blotted out. Everything was back into total darkness. Well, what in
the world happened? Well again, I didn’t plan to do this but, I guess, maybe it’s for a reason. This is what I think happened after that beautiful, beautiful creation of verse 1. My it’s been about 13 years since we taught Genesis on television - and the last time, we taught this. All right, Ezekiel 28:13 where God is speaking through the prophet to an individual, and He says:

**Ezekiel 28:13a**

"Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God;...." Now I always have to stop when I teach some of these things. How many personalities were in the Garden of Eden, not counting God Himself? Three. Adam, Eve and Satan. Okay, so, whoever God is talking to, it’s one of those three. "Thou hast been in Eden...."

**Ezekiel 28:13b**

"...every precious stone was thy covering, (and then He names them) the sardius, topaz, and the diamond. the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created." So we know that we’re not talking about a person of the Godhead, we’re talking about a created individual. Now verse 14 it tells us who it is.

**Ezekiel 28:14a**

"Thou art the anointed cherub (an angel) that covereth; (or ruleth is a better word in the Hebrew here. Here we have an angel who was ruling and reigning. And God says,) and I have set thee so: (I’ve put you in this place of authority) thou wast upon the holy mountain of God;...." Now remember a mountain in the Old Testament is a ‘kingdom.’ Now there are no human beings yet, as Adam and Eve weren’t on the scene yet when this angel was ruling - it was an angelic kingdom.

**Ezekiel 28:14b**

"...thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire." Those gemstones up there in verse 13, the diamond and so forth. Now verse 15.

**Ezekiel 28:15**

"Thou wast (past tense) perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, (What’s the next word?) till (for a period of time this angel was perfect, he was sinless. But there came a time) iniquity was found in thee." Now, God will not stand iniquity without doing something about it - in angels any more than humans. All
right, now you have to come back to Isaiah chapter 14 to find out who this angel was, and what his sin was. He’s named in verse 12. **Transcribers note:** And it’s the only place his name appears in Scripture, and normally only in the KING JAMES - which I think means he’s removed it from the other translations, as it does show him in a bad light.

*Isaiah 14:12*

"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! (because of his angelic position as the ruler over that angelic kingdom) how art thou cut down to the ground. (why? Because of iniquity) which didst weaken the nations!" So we know that we’re talking about Lucifer, whom we know as Satan, the Devil. Now verse 13; here’s the past that led up to his fall.

*Isaiah 14:13-14*

"For thou hast said in thine heart, (he becomes an egotist. And this ruling angel over an earthly glorious gemstone-filled kingdom of angels says) *I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, (which is normally the position of God in Scripture) in the sides of the north: 14. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; (now he epitomizes all of his dreams with this statement) I will be like the most High." What’s he trying to do? Usurp the place of God. And what does God say? "Oh, no you don’t!" And so what did He do? He cast him down. Satan’s first casting out is when he first fell in this rebellion. But, now, come back with me all the way to Revelation and we’ll see what Peter’s talking about; these angels that fell, well, what are they and who are they?

We pick them up now in Revelation chapter 12 verse 4, where in his rebellion in assuming to take over the throneroom of God, evidently one-third of the angels over whom he was ruling followed him in the rebellion. And here in Revelation we pick them up.

*Revelation 12:4*

"And his tail (that is the serpent’s, the dragon’s, Satan as he’s symbolized in Scripture) drew the third part of the stars of heaven, (now the stars here are the angels) and did cast them to the earth: (and the rest of the verse skips ahead many years) and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born." (and that was at Bethlehem)
All right, now then if you’ll just back up a couple of pages to the little book of Jude again, right in front of Revelation, we pick up these same fallen angels in verse 6. Now you can put a whole scenario together, hopefully. Here we have this ruling angel over this glorious earthly kingdom, which was filled with the gemstones of fire – beauty beyond description. And he had a whole population of angels over which he ruled. But, he got proud and lifted up and attempted to usurp God’s kingdom, throne and rule; and evidently one-third of these angels consorted with him. All right now, verse 6 in Jude.

**Jude 1:6**

"And the angels which kept not their first estate, (in other words, as ruling or being under Lucifer’s rule on that original glorious planet) but left their own habitation, (in other words, they attempted to follow Lucifer in his rebellion) he (God) hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day."

All right, now then, just back up a few pages to II Peter and maybe this will make some sense. II Peter chapter 2 now verse 4:

**II Peter 2:4**

"For if God spared not the angels that sinned, (who rebelled against God’s authority and attempted to follow Lucifer) but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;" In perfect accord with Jude and Revelation, see? All right, now we come to the next event that Peter can relate to; verse 5, when again the mass of humanity rebelled against the God of creation and, again, in their wickedness, God had to move in with a judgment.

**II Peter 2:5a**

"And spared not the old world, (destroyed it with a flood) but saved Noah the eighth person,...." This is always mind-boggling to me. Now you want to realize there could have very easily been four or more billion people at the time of the flood. Four billion is the number I’ve used over the years, because I had a friend back in the moon-space-days who has access to a computer and he and a friend of his, just for common interest, one day started out with two people (like Adam and Eve and their offspring), and remembering they lived for eight - nine hundred years.

People back then had tremendous health and vigor, and putting all those things into the mix, my friend said, you could easily come up with four billion people in that 1,600 years from Adam to the flood. And to me, it’s only reasonable that there were at
least four billion people. And out of four billion, how many were saved? Eight. Now that’s a pretty small number. It’s frightening isn’t it?

And what did the Lord say? "Narrow is the way and few there be that find it, but broad is the way that leadeth to destruction and many go in thereat." That’s the way it’s always been. Mankind always tries to do things his way, rather than God’s way.

II Peter 2:5b

"...(Noah) a preacher of righteousness,...." It wasn’t that the people didn’t have a chance. Noah preached for 120 years. For 120 years, Noah proclaimed to that generation (who I feel had as much technology as we do, and I’ve got reason for thinking that, so it wasn’t that he was limited because of communications. And so he let that whole generation know) that judgment was coming. And then, as I’ve pointed out when I taught this years and years ago, when the Ark was finished and everything was on board and God was ready to release the floodwaters from beneath and above, He gave them how much time? Seven more days. The gangplank stayed down from the Ark to the ground for seven days. For what purpose? That if anybody would wake up and realize that old Noah must be right, they could have gone on board. They could have - the opportunity was there. Seven days. I call it seven days of Grace. How many accepted it? Not a one!

In fact I made reference here several programs back, a book that I read about the time that I was teaching all this years back, by a Lutheran theologian out of – well, his book comes out of Concordia Publishing, and I’m sure quite a few of my listeners at the time ordered the book. But he made this analogy, that while Noah was building the Ark for the 120 years, as huge as that thing was, he must have had some extra hired help, as we’d call it - employees - to help in the building of the Ark. And they must have heard the old man preach. They must have heard him tell that a flood was coming and that’s what this box was getting ready for and it would be the salvation for anybody and anything that would come in. But when the box was finished and the animals were all on board; Noah’s family was on board; everything was ready for the deluge, but God says seven more days.

And then he made this observation, and isn’t this exactly the way it is today? People are busy working in the church, singing in the choir, teaching Sunday School lessons and so forth: and yet when eternity comes, they’re going to miss it. It’s frightening isn’t it? But true. There’s going to be multitudes as in Noah’s day. And why are they going to miss heaven? Because they have refused to believe Paul’s beautiful Gospel of Salvation that we find in I Corinthians 15:1-4 that he shared with you
and I here in this Church Age. People are trying to get to Heaven every way except the right way!

All right and so, the flood came and only eight survived it out of, I guess, about four billion people. All right, verse 6, and we come up through history here. Now we’re past the flood a little over 400 years, and we’re at Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham and Lot were the ones that divided the land and Lot took Sodom remember? All right, so verse 6:

II Peter 2:6

"And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, (utterly destroyed them) making them an example unto those that after should live ungodly;" (as the Sodomites did). You see what the world is heading for? The same kind of a judgment. Oh it’s coming. People think I’m kidding when I say that almost the whole human race is going to disappear by the time the Tribulation ends, all six - seven billion of the human race is going to go because it’s got to be made ready for His glorious kingdom, and there can be nothing sinful or wicked in that kingdom. And so there’s the example. And that’s why Peter is using it. Even as God destroyed the iniquity before the flood, even as He destroyed the iniquity in Sodom and Gomorrah - and we all know what that was - and He condemned them with an overthrow and a total destruction because of their ungodly lifestyle.

Now we don’t know how big Sodom and Gomorrah were but I’m going to guess 18 or 20 thousand, because if I remember right, our guide told us when we were in Jericho that Jericho was a city of about 25 or 30 thousand and no doubt Sodom and Gomorrah were probably about the same. I’m guessing. But, out of however many thousand inhabitants were in Sodom and Gomorrah, how many escaped? One. Well, I know the two daughters, but nevertheless, for all practical purposes, spiritually speaking, Lot was the only "just" one.

II Peter 2:7

"And delivered just (righteous) Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked:" That’s what the word ‘just’ means here; it doesn’t mean ‘only,’ it means the ‘righteous’ man, Lot. "Even though he was vexed with the filthy manner of living of the wicked." That’s what they called it then and that’s what I call it today. It is a filthy manner of living.

II Peter 2:8
"(For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;)" Lot knew that all this that was going on was utterly wrong but, because of his position, because of his coveting materialism (because you want to remember Sodom and Gomorrah were prosperous. Sodom and Gomorrah had it made. To see that, let’s go to Ezekiel 16:49. Now this was Sodom and Gomorrah, And this is what hooked Lot. He wasn’t content to just be eking out an existence with Abraham and his flocks up there in the mountains), **Lot got covetous.**

And this is what makes me think that the world will maintain a certain level of prosperity until the Lord returns because the scenario was the same before the flood. The Lord Himself said it in Luke, that at the time of Noah what did they do? They married, and they gave in marriage. They built and they bought and they sold. It was a prospering economy. Well, look what Sodom and Gomorrah were when they were destroyed.

**Ezekiel 16:49**

"Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy." In other words, they were selfish. They were nothing but "me first."

**Ezekiel 16:50**

"And they were haughty, (proud - now we’re talking about the citizens of Sodom and Gomorrah just before they’re destroyed.) and committed abomination before me: therefore (God says) I took them away as I saw good." That was Sodom and Gomorrah; prosperous, materialistic. They had everything. They weren’t wanting for anything. And when you have an abundance of idleness, what does that speak of? Prosperity. Look at Rome before they fell. Why in the world did Rome build all the coliseums throughout the empire? To keep idle people occupied because, in their wealth, they didn’t have to work. They had so much wealth that all they did was let the conquered slaves do the everyday labor, and the end result, of course, was Rome imploded. Now back to II Peter. Let’s read verse 8 again, and we’ll be through.

**II Peter 2:8**

"(For that righteous man dwelling among them, [in the midst of all of their wickedness as well as their material prosperity] in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;)" Now what does that tell you? The man was a believer. He never lost that. But he became materialistic in his
thinking - he left Abraham and his flocks and his herds to come down to materialistic, prosperous Sodom and Gomorrah; and as a result "he vexed himself day after day."
Lesson Three • Part I

The Mark of False Teachers and Scoffers

II Peter 2:9 – 3:18

Today we’ll begin with II Peter chapter 2 verse 9. Now of course, in this chapter Peter is laying out the warnings against false teachers, and Paul does the same thing. Paul warns us over and over here in this Church Age that there are going to be false teachers coming in. "Wolves in sheep’s clothing." And these wolves are going to destroy the flocks; and Peter says the same thing, even though Peter is addressing Jewish believers - yet the warning is still the same, that the great adversary, Satan, will oppose God’s work in any shape or form.

Remember, Peter has been giving us examples of how God has dealt with those who succumb to false teaching in His times of judgment. And you remember in our last program, we were referring to the flood, and we referred to the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah. All right, and then we come in today at verse 9.

II Peter 2:9

"The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:"

Come back with me to John’s Gospel because the first thing I think we’d better point out is that, all through Scripture from Genesis to Revelation, we have these two groups of people that are brought before us constantly. Not only Jew and Gentile. That, of course, is two separate categories. But the ones we’re talking about today are the just and the unjust.

The saved and the lost. You’ve got them all through human history - those two divisions of people. Whether it was before the Law, whether it was during the Law, whether it was during Christ’s earthly ministry, whether it was after His ministry, or whether it’s the Apostle Paul and the Church Age; it doesn’t make one whit of difference - there are always these two classes of people - the saved and the lost; or as Jesus speaks of them here, the just and the unjust. All right, here in the Gospel of John chapter 5, He makes the same delineation that Peter does, and this is just to show how that Scripture delineates. There is that clear-cut division of the human race into two classes. Verse 28.

John 5:28
"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice," In other words, everyone that has ever lived and died is in that verse. Now verse 29.

John 5:29

"And shall come forth; they that have done good, (the just, the believers, the saved) unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, (the unsaved, the lost) unto the resurrection of damnation." Or condemnation. And so here you have those two categories of people – saved and lost - and they’re never going to lose their position, in whatever they are in, after dying. All right, now back to II Peter chapter 2 - Peter is saying the same thing as we look at that verse again.

II Peter 2:9

"The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:" He will reserve the unjust, the lost, the unbelieving world, unto the day of judgment to be punished! Now, you know the liberals don’t like that, do they? The liberals don’t like to think that we have a God Who’s going to deal with the rebellious. The liberals would like to tell us that God, in His mercy and so forth, is somehow or other going to overlook all of their evil and their lack of faith, or someday they’ll come to the place where God will spare them anyway - but there’s only one thing wrong with that kind of thinking. "That’s Not Scripture!" That’s not what the Book says. They’re going to come to their day of punishment, the day of judgment.

II Peter 2:10a

"But chiefly (that word ‘chiefly’ always says paramount, or the number one thing) them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government,…" Does that ring a bell lately? All you have to do is just think back a few weeks; you’ve got these people everywhere.

II Peter 2:10b

"…Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities." How does another place put it? They have no compunction about calling white – black. Or calling black – white. They have no absolutes. And so they run off at the mouth with all of this stuff and do nothing but cause turmoil. Well, Peter just lays it on the line. And isn’t it amazing? Peter is back here 1,900 years ago, and you know what? The human race hasn’t changed a bit. Not one bit. Oh we may have more
technology. We may get from one place to another a little faster, **but personality wise** – the human race has not changed a bit.

*II Peter 2:11*

"Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord." Even the angels don’t pay them any mind because it would almost be wasted effort.

*II Peter 2:12a*

"But these...." And I can just about put most liberals around the world here - whether it’s political or religious liberals, liberals are liberals. And they have no compunction about outright lying or twisting the truth.

I remember one was being interviewed on Sean Hannity’s Fox TV program and the guy was quoting Sean as having said something. Sean said, "I never said anything like that. I have never even said anything close to that. Can’t you people ever tell the truth? Do you always have to lie?" Well that’s it, see? And Peter is saying the same thing. These people cannot do anything but speak "evil of dignities." And now verse 12. Peter, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, puts them down at the level of brute beasts. Boy, that’s awful isn’t it?

*II Peter 2:12a*

"But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed...." A beast has no compunction about life and death - technically. I don’t believe that totally, because I always say an animal will do anything to spare its own life. But the lesson is, these false teachers have as much conscience about calling good things bad and bad things good as a beast. They have no moral turpitude, they have no moral anchor.

*II Peter 2:12b*

"...speak evil of the things that they understand not:...." They rattle around like ‘a BB in a tin can.’ That’s about what Peter is saying. They speak of things that they know nothing of.

*II Peter 2:12c*

"...and shall utterly perish in their own corruption;" Well, you remember when Paul was at Mars Hill? And what did all the philosophers of the day call Paul? ‘The Babbler!’ The Babbler, which means he doesn’t know what he’s talking about. But
you know what? The truth of the matter is - he was the only one that did. And the truth of the matter is, if you go and visit Mars Hill today, there’s a big bronze plaque honoring - not the philosophers of the day, but who? Paul. And it’s the things that Paul spoke that are still part and parcel of Scripture, really.

And so isn’t that typical of the world. Oh, they scoff at everything pertaining to the truth of Scripture but, yet, everything they say is nothing more than a ‘BB in a tin can.’ They just rattle at the mouth. All right, Peter knew it and by inspiration, puts it in here so plainly "And they will perish in their own corruption." Now verse 13.

II Peter 2:13

"And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you;" You know what these people are? Dyed in the wool hypocrites. They can talk out of both sides of their mouths. They can be whatever the occasion demands, but basically they’re false.

II Peter 2:14a

"Having eyes full of adultery, (see how all this fits together) and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls:...." In other words, they’re not content to live in their own filth - they’ve got to constantly recruit others to join them, see?

II Peter 2:14b-15a

"...beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children: 15. Which have forsaken the right way,...." Now this is not a very pretty picture, but it’s truth. This is where so many of these people are existing.

II Peter 2:15b

"...and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam (which was way back there in Numbers, remember?) the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;" Now you remember the story of Balaam? How that, as the Israelites were coming out of their wilderness experience and the Lord was bringing them around to come in from the east side across Jordan and as they were coming through Moab, the king knew that he couldn’t do anything with them militarily. There was no way he could obliterate those millions of Jews, or Israelites, coming through his part of the world - so he sends his emissaries out to the east to this false prophet Balaam for the sole purpose of bringing Balaam back and putting a curse on Israel.
Because old Balak figured that if he could get Balaam to put a curse on Israel - then Israel, by virtue of their spiritual rebellion and whatever else would follow, would be destroyed by God, and then he wouldn’t have to. But it didn’t work, see? God wouldn’t let Balaam put a curse on Israel. And Balaam himself, when he saw the multitude of the Israelites, said, "I can’t do that." But he just about did anyway. And you remember what his final act was? He convinced Balak to get all the beautiful young women of Moab to entice the Jewish men and cause them to commit adultery; and thousands of them did. But it wasn’t enough to bring the destruction of Israel by a merciful God.

But this is what Balaam was trying to do because he had been offered half the kingdom. In other words, he was going to do it for what? **For money!** Money. Just look at the world today. What people won’t do for huge chunks of money. And it’s all because of what? One word. Corruption! Corruption! All right, same way in the Spiritual world as it is in the material or the business world. So "he loved the wages of unrighteousness." In other words, he was willing to destroy Israel because of what the king had promised him if he could bring it off.

**II Peter 2:16**

"*But was rebuked for his iniquity:* (that is Balaam) **the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet.**" Now there’s a place in the Bible where the scoffer likes to scoff. Whoever heard of a donkey talking? Well, granted, ordinarily it doesn’t. But on the other hand, Jesus Himself said "*that with God nothing is impossible.*" That’s nothing for God to make a donkey talk. Nothing! And we know from Scripture that it did. It turned its head back to old Balaam and really gave him the whole ‘what-for.’ And so he was rebuked through the donkey.

**II Peter 2:17a**

"*These…*" Now who are we talking about? False teachers. These people who don’t really care how truthful they are, or how accurate they are with the Scriptures - they’ll use the Scripture, absolutely; that’s how they get people hooked. They use the Scriptures and they just feed the multitudes with their poison. One way of killing somebody without anyone knowing what was going on would be to lace their meat with arsenic, just a little at a time, and over time, the arsenic would kill them. **Well that’s what false teachers do.** They don’t just come right up into a pulpit and say, "Okay, I’m a false teacher. I’m going to give you a whole bunch of garbage." No. They come up into that pulpit and they’re as smooth as oil and the people fall for it. It’s not Scriptural. It’s not Biblical. Most of the time it’s half-truths. And the people are falling for it by the millions. All right, so now Peter continues then these false teachers.
II Peter 2:17a

"These are wells without water,...." Now for us in our day and time it doesn’t mean that much, but you see in the Middle East, a well was everything because water was scarce. All right, so now Peter by inspiration uses that very example; that these false teachers are like a water well where somebody would be all encouraged, "Oh there’s wells!" But it’d be dry. It absolutely wouldn’t give a drop to sustain their thirst. And that’s what these false teachers are. "They are wells without water."

II Peter 2:17b

"...clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever." All right, now I think the clouds that Peter is talking about here are referred to in another place, maybe in Jude as "clouds without water." Now, I can remember the 1930’s as a kid on the farm up there in Iowa, and we were as dry as a bone - the dust was blowing. And a cloud would go over and my Dad would get all encouraged - maybe that could build into a thunderstorm. And then all of a sudden, poof - it’s gone. Well what was it? Total disappointment. All right, that’s what false teachers are, and I’m afraid we’re seeing it all around us today.

Oh, they come on the horizon and they have all the flim-flam and everything, and they can put out their garbage, but it’s the same thing. It has nothing that will sustain the spirit - they’re like an empty or a dry well; they’re like clouds without water. All right, let’s move on. Verse 18.

II Peter 2:18

"For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error." They have survived God’s judgment thus far, and they’re spewing out their false teaching. They’re spewing out all of the invitations to wealth and materialism, and if this isn’t exactly what we’re seeing today. The multitudes are following this stuff. Very few want to follow truth. But, oh, they’ll follow this false stuff like it’s the last thing going.

II Peter 2:3a

"And through covetousness shall they with feigned words, make merchandise of you;...." "They make merchandise of you!" Now what does it mean to make merchandise of you? They’re going to capitalize on their subjects. And what are they after? Your money! They’re after your money. They’re making merchandise of you. After all, why do you sell merchandise? To gain the money. And that’s what these
people are doing. **They’re picking the pockets of the millions - making merchandise of them, and you know who they are.** Well, they just fall right in line with all these things that Peter is talking about and nothing has changed even though it’s been 1,900 years. All right, now let’s move on to verse 19.

**II Peter 2:19a**

"**While they promise them** (what?) **liberty,** (oh, they can make rash promises) **they themselves are the servants of** (what?) **corruption:**....." Now this isn’t nice language. I know it isn’t, but it’s the truth. This is the way it is. These false teachers are nothing but the servants of corruption.

**II Peter 2:19b**

"...for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage." Now I suppose here’s where people say the King James is hard to understand. Well, all it means here is that, if someone finally gets the upper hand over you and you become his slave or his servant, then he’s the master. He’s the master, you’re the servant. See? All right, and this is what Peter’s using; and so, for those people who have come under someone else’s overlordship, it’s the same one then who has been brought into bondage. All right, now verse 20.

**II Peter 2:20**

"**For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.**" Now, an old boy comes to mind back in Acts, chapter 8. Here Philip, you remember, goes up to Samaria and is preaching. Acts chapter 8 verse 9, and we’re going to do this as quickly as we can because this fits the description perfectly of what Peter is talking about.

**Acts 8:9,10**

"**But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery,** (powers of Satan) **and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one:** 10. **To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God.**" No, he has the power of Satan. See how easily he deceived all these people?

**Acts 8:11-13**
"And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries. (so he’s not using the power of God, he’s using the power of Satan.)

12. But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. (now watch this. This is Simon the sorcerer the false teacher)

13. Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done." Providentially, through Philip.

Acts 8:14-18

"Now when the Apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: 15. Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: [that is these that had become believers under Philip’s preaching] 16. (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)

17. Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. 18. And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles’ hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money," All right, now Peter and John come and lay hands on them - and remember this is still back in the Jewish economy - this has nothing to do with you and I in the Church Age. This was all part and parcel of the Jerusalem Jewish Church. All right, then "They laid their hands on them, they received the Holy Spirit and when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostle’s hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them (what?) money." What’s on that guy’s brain? All he can think of is money. And he doesn’t care how he gets it. All right, now, when he saw what the disciples could do he thought, "Man I want this because this will generate more income."

Acts 8:19-20

"Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost." (can’t you just see the guy?) 20. But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money." Now, listen, isn’t that exactly what we’re seeing today? Just think, this is almost being played out again. Now verse 21. This was the true heart of this Simon.

Acts 8:21-23

"Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. 22. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. 23. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." Hey, the guy up in the previous verse
said he had believed and been baptized. You see what I’m driving at? He went through all the motions but he never had heart-faith. He was just a professor without possessing. And again the world is full of those. And they go through all this rigmarole because of all the promises of wealth and money and health and what have you.
Lesson Three • Part II

The Mark of False Teachers and Scoffers

II Peter 2:9 – 3:18

As we study the Scriptures together, hopefully you’ll take it beyond the simple level and study on your own. My, it thrills our hearts when people write or call and say how they have gotten really excited about studying the Word of God because it is the most exciting book on earth! But, as I’ve said before, the scoffer, 99 times out of 100, has never really studied this Book. And he’s just scoffing from ignorance because anybody who really studies this can’t help but understand that it’s the supernaturally inspired Word of God.

All right, let’s get right back where we left off in II Peter chapter 2 (we left off in verse 20), and I think we’ll read it again.

II Peter 2:20a

"For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge…." In other words, these false teachers have enough understanding; they’re not totally rejecting everything, but after they’ve escaped the pollutions of the world that has the corruptions of it.

II Peter 2:20b

"...through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, (that is by the corruption) the latter end is worse with them than the beginning."

Remember, in our last taping we went back to Simon, the sorcerer, in the book of Acts - and how that, after Samaria received the Gospel, Simon wanted that power as well. But he never became a true believer. Oh, he made all the outward appearances because otherwise the guys wouldn’t have baptized him, and he made a profession but he never had a heart-born salvation. And, consequently, if we can take a little bit from ancient church history evidently Simon went on to become one of the biggest thorns in the side of the early Church. He just became a complete adversary of the truth.

All right, so now then, we can go on into verse 21 and these kinds of people who had had enough understanding of the truth that they can use it to enhance their own false teaching. Verse 21.
II Peter 2:21

"For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them." Now what’s Peter saying? It would have been better, so far as their end-judgment is concerned, had they never had any knowledge of the truth at all. They’d have been better off to go into eternity as an ignorant pagan, than to have had enough understanding to have embraced it and then turn around and reject it.

Now, I think another example of this (and we taught this quite in depth when we were back in the Hebrews lessons, and that) would be back in Hebrews chapter 6, where we have the same kind of a scenario as with this Simon - only Simon was a little more, I suppose, to the extreme. He was a false teacher and a follower of satanic magicians and so forth - whereas these Hebrew people that are addressed here were just simply Judaisers who had been steeped in Judaism and the Mosaic Law (and they saw a little bit of Paul’s Gospel of Grace which is faith in the finished work of the cross + nothing else for salvation). But they, too, turn turned away from that and went back into Judaism. So let’s look at it in Hebrews 6:4.

Hebrews 6:4-6a

"For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, (see we’re talking about the same thing. They’ve had enough understanding, they could have latched on to it) and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost," (the Holy Spirit had done His work) 5. And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, (my, they got a good view of everything) 6. If they shall fall away,..." Remember when we studied this, the Greek word was ‘parapipto,’ if I remember correctly, and parapipto was a Greek word that gave the idea of a woman who scornfully turned from her husband to go into adultery. And that’s what these people are doing. They’ve seen enough of the truth; they could have embraced it; they could have had it, but they scornfully turned around and rejected it and went back into their Judaism, and that’s why Paul then uses these words in verse 6:

Hebrews 6:6

"If they shall fall away, (if they shall scornfully reject all this) to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame."

All right, now Peter puts it in a little different language, but it’s the same setting. Only now instead of talking about good mainline Judaising Jews, now he’s talking about
Jews who were false teachers. And I’m sure he was talking about Jews - Jews who are false teachers. Now verse 22.

II Peter 2:22

""But it is happened unto them (these false teachers who had enough knowledge that they could have gone on into the truth and latched on to it, but instead, used it for merchandise, used it to enhance their own monetary situation.) according to the true proverb, (that comes out of the Old Testament economy now) The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." In other words, unless you can actually change the nature of these creatures, they’re still going to go back to their old way. And it’s the same way with a person who partakes of a false salvation. They can make a verbal commitment and they can make an outward profession but, until it comes down into the heart and transforms their nature, they’re going to go right back into their old lifestyle. And we see it over and over and over. But, for the person that is truly born from above, he’s truly had a salvation experience - he’s not going to be like the hog that has just been cleaned up and goes back to his old mud hole. No, they’re going to turn their backs on the old life and they’re going to start growing in the new. And Peter uses the same kind of an example as Paul would use in his writings to us.

All right, so there’s the problem, these people embrace enough to make it merchandisable. The Lord Himself warns us of these false teachers, something that we all have to be aware of. In fact, come back to Matthew 24 where, again, the Lord Himself is warning against the false teachers that would be coming in the last days. And, of course, we know that we’re approaching them. We’re positive that we’re approaching the last days that the Lord is referring to in Matthew 24. Lets just drop in at verse 4. And this is from the lips of the Lord Himself.

Matthew 24:4

"And Jesus answered and said unto them, (to the Twelve as they were asking the questions. Watch this carefully) Take heed (or Paul would say beware) that no man (what?) deceive you." What’s the warning? Don’t be deceived! Don’t be taken in by false teachers. Here’s the reason, verse 5.

Matthew 24:5a

"For many shall come in my name,..." They’re going to make no apology for talking in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. And they’ll drop that Name glibly as part and parcel of their makeup. But the Lord reminds us.
Matthew 24:5

"For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; (and by it they’re going to what?) and shall deceive many." And we’re seeing it. My, when you see all these vast crowds come rolling into these places (oh, I’m sure the Lord’s going to save some of them, hopefully), but don’t you believe for a minute that these vast crowds are all experiencing a true born-from-above experience. If they were, we wouldn’t have the problems in the world that we’ve got. It would have an impact on the community, but it doesn’t. **Those vast crowds don’t change things a bit, and one of the reasons is that most of these people don’t ever get to hear Paul’s Gospel of I Corinthians 15:1-4, for the salvation message. Most of those people at the meetings are just taken for their money and get lip service.**

So the whole warning is, don’t be taken in by all these who can use the name of the Lord Jesus and seemingly preach the Gospel; and yet, with it, bring in as Paul calls them, "their damnable heresies." Hey, they’re our sign to beware that this is maybe not the truth that they claim it is.

All right, come back with me to II Peter now; we’re ready for chapter 3. Remember that Peter is writing to Jewish believers of the Kingdom economy. There’s nothing of Paul’s Gospel of salvation in here. You can’t find a single reference of salvation by faith and faith alone in Christ’s finished work of the cross. Oh, he certainly alludes to the fact that Christ is Savior and all that, but it’s not a presentation of the Pauline Gospel of salvation - that Christ died for the sins of the world, and that He was buried and that He arose again the third day, and that we must believe it today. Paul’s Gospel of salvation is not here in these Jewish epistles because this is still Jews who had been under that Kingdom economy. When I say the Kingdom economy, remember, **the Jews under Peter’s preaching had to believe that Jesus was the Promised Messiah and King for their salvation. That’s what they were to believe. And when they believed it, they became believers and they became members of the Jerusalem church.**

But it was a Jewish church. There are no Gentiles involved whatsoever. And those are the offshoots, then, from the Jerusalem church that scattered because of Saul of Tarsus’ persecution back in Acts 8:1 - and they established other little congregations around that end of the Mediterranean, up along the Galilee. But these churches, I think, were predominately operating in Western Asia Minor, or Turkey as we now know it today, and those are the same seven letters to the seven churches in Revelation. All were in what we know of as Western Turkey. All right, so remember, these are the Jews to whom Peter is writing.
Also remember, when we introduced the book of James, those Jews knew nothing of Paul’s breaking open of the timeline for this Age of Grace for the past 2,000 years. The only thing they knew was the timeline as it was prophesied in the Old Testament (like in Psalms chapter 2), and as Jesus and Peter had continued it. And they looked for everything to be fulfilled within their lifetime, a matter of 20 or 30 years, and Christ would usher in the Tribulation that would bring His Second Coming. He could bring in the Kingdom, and all of these Jews were looking forward to that. But we know that never happened, because Paul’s Age of Grace, which was not prophesied in the Old Testament came into being, thus setting all of that aside for a season.

So II Peter, like I Peter, is preparing these people for the pressures they would be coming under because of their faith and the promises of the prophetic Scriptures. That’s why he’s always going back to the Old Testament. You never see anything from Paul appear in Peter. Peter isn’t quoting Paul until he tells us to go to Paul in the last few verses to find salvation.

So always be aware of this; that Peter and James and John are writing to these Jewish believers in view of the fact that the Old Testament prophecies are just going to keep unfolding - and the Tribulation, Second Coming, and Kingdom Age is right out in front of these Jewish believers. All right, you’ll see it as we come along. Now verse 1, and this second epistle was probably written about 10 years after the first.

**II Peter 3:1**

"This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance:" In other words, the true believers that he’s referring to, "by way of remembrance."

**II Peter 3:2a**

"That ye may be mindful of the words (now watch this, highlight it, because this fits what I just said) which were spoken before by the holy (who?) prophets,...." Who were the prophets? Your Old Testament writers. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Joel, Hosea, etc. And what did all the Old Testament prophets foresee? The coming of Israel’s Messiah and King and then the Tribulation. Of course, He’d be rejected and go back to Heaven - and then the Tribulation - and then their Messiah would return and set up the Kingdom, and they were looking for that.

Okay, so this is why the constant reminder is "go back to the promises of the holy prophets." Now let’s show you what Paul says again in Romans 15 verse 8. We’ve read it often enough some of you should just know it from memory now; but this fits
right along with what Peter is saying, that everything written by the prophets is now right out in front of them.

*Romans 15:8*

"Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision (Israel) for the truth of God, (and here’s why He came) to confirm (or fulfill) the promises made unto the fathers:" Well, who were the fathers? Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, Moses and then the prophets. And Christ came to fulfill all those promises. And what were the promises? The King and the Kingdom. That was basically what they were looking for. The glories of the Kingdom. My, who wouldn’t? Heaven on earth! That should excite anybody. And so that was the hope of Israel. And it still is for a Jew that has any knowledge at all. What’s his daily prayer? Next year Jerusalem! Next year Jerusalem! And the Jews have been uttering that for hundreds and hundreds of years.

And then the ignoramuses of the world tell us that the Jews have no business there? They’ve been looking forward to their homeland for 2,000 years. Next year Jerusalem! Why? Because that’s where the King will come. That’s where the Heaven on earth will originate. And so all of the prophets were looking forward to that. All right, back to II Peter - and so he is in line with that.

*II Peter 3:2*

"That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, (the Old Testament writers. And of course, that just carried on through into Christ’s earthly ministry.) and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour:" They were all working on that same timeline coming out of the prophetic Scriptures. The coming of the Messiah. Rejected. Crucified. Raised from the dead. And Peter proclaims that in Acts chapter 2, "You killed Him but God raised Him from the dead. He can still fulfill the promises."

He went back to Glory and He’s going to sit at the Father’s right hand and what’s the next word in Psalms 110? "Until." Until, and then He’ll arise from that seated position and He’s yet going to fulfill the promises made to Israel. And we’re getting closer every day. That’s why the whole Middle East is in a turmoil. I can’t figure out why people can’t see it. Why isn’t all this turmoil over in the Orient someplace? Why isn’t it over in Western Europe? Why is it in the Middle East? Because at the core of it all is Jerusalem, the Nation of Israel. Verse 3.

*II Peter 3:3*
"Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, (false teachers again) walking after their own (what?) lusts," Well what in the world is their lusts? Desires. And it doesn’t have to be sexual. My goodness, you can lust for money. You can lust for palaces and houses and land. See? And that’s what people do when they start getting money. The more they get, the more they want. Remember the old Texas rancher? Somebody asked him, "When in the world are you going to stop buying land?" Well he says, "When I’ve got everything around me." Well that never stops. Every time you buy another half-section, there’s another half-section on the other side that’s still there. And so if you’re just going to buy until you’ve got everything that’s next to you, that never ends. And that is the lustful makeup of these scoffers and false teachers, and Peter is warning his people that this is a sign of the last days.

Now, the timeline goes like this: the time of Christ’s first advent, His three years of ministry and His ascension. And then was to come the seven years of Tribulation, Christ would return and set up the thousand-year Kingdom. It would end and then we’d go into eternity. Now you see, this whole ball of wax from Christ’s first advent to the ushering in of eternity in Scripture is called what? Last days.

All of this was to be consummated to bring the world to the place where we’d go into eternity. Now remember that, had it not been for the 2,000 years of the Church Age, all of this, His first advent and then the seven years of Tribulation, would have been a matter of 15 years or so. But when you throw in the thousand-year Kingdom, of course, now we’re talking about more time. But nevertheless, look at all the Scripture the thousand-year-reign of Christ is associated with - these prophecies that are all called the "last days." Now when you look at it in that light, maybe it makes a little more sense when we talk about in "these last days."

All right, come back to chapter 3. So Peter says that in these last days as they’re approaching now; the Tribulation, the Second Coming and the Kingdom; one of the signs that they were in the last days was the appearance of scoffers. Well, they had them then. But that doesn’t cancel them out because we’ve got them now.

I told a lady here a while back, and I think it’s so apropos. They were visiting us and we were sitting at our kitchen table and she was talking about an experience that she had had years back - sort of a bizarre experience. A great white light filled her room or something like that and she had always just assumed that that was Jesus and that was her salvation. (II Corinthians 11:14) But after she got to watching our program and understood the Gospel of Grace, she became truly saved. So she’s sharing this with me, and she said, "Les this bothers me. All those years I was thinking that that bright light experience had saved me, and it didn’t. I was lost."
I said, "So what? The important thing is you’re saved now!" So regardless of what the past may be, if you’re a believer today, that’s what counts. **Are you saved now?**

Okay, now Peter is more or less saying the same thing. That we’ve got to understand that all of the signs of the soon-coming Tribulation and the Messiah of Israel were right in front of them; they were seeing it then. But don’t chuck that aside just because that’s all past; because here we are 2,000 years later and the whole scenario is back on the scene. Remember I pointed this out, that just as surely as we had the Roman Empire and Israel in the land (as all these prophecies were ready to be fulfilled), **here we are 2,000 years later and once again Israel is back in the land; the Roman Empire is reappearing in the Common Market, and so everything is now reset. It’s reset and ready to go again, see?**

All right, now keep that in mind then that as Peter is proclaiming this to his Jewish believers in preparation for the end and the last days. Even though we’ve had a 2,000-year interval, we are, once again, in the same place. Israel is back in the land. The Roman Empire is reappearing. The scoffers are coming in like never before in human history. Everything is reset. Déjà vu. Okay, verse 4, and these scoffers will say:

**II Peter 3:4a**

"**And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers…**" These are Jews that are saying this, because who was constantly referring to the fathers? Well, Jews were. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They were the fathers of Israel. And so this is what the scoffers are saying, "Why, ever since Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, we’ve been hearing this stuff. It’s never going to happen."

**II Peter 3:4b**

"**…for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.**" What are they ignoring? Things aren’t always the same as they were from the creation. There’s one great big upheaval that intervened between creation and when Peter was writing, and what was it? Noah’s Flood. See, Noah’s Flood totally revamped the whole earth. And so he goes on into that. That’s the next subject. All right, the scoffers say, "All things continue as they were from the creation, nothing has ever changed." Peter says, "Wait a minute!" Verse 5.

**II Peter 3:5a**

"**For this they willingly are ignorant…**" I like that term, "willingly ignorant," because that’s most people. They don’t want to know the truth. They just simply say, I don’t want to hear it. What is that? Willingly ignorant. We get many phone calls from
people who say they show some of these things they have learned to individuals that should be able to say, "Well, just let me study this for a while and then I’ll see if I can agree with you or not." But they won’t. They just slam the Book shut and say, "I don’t believe that!" Well, what are they? Willingly ignorant. All right, now in this case, Peter is talking about Noah’s Flood.

**II Peter 3:5**

"For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water:" (and they are willingly ignorant.)
Lesson Three • Part III

The Mark of False Teachers and Scoffers

II Peter 2:9 – 3:18

All right, II Peter chapter 3 and we’ll just pick up where we left off in the last lesson, verse 5.

II Peter 3:5-6

"For this they willingly are ignorant of, (not because they couldn’t help it, but they don’t want to know) that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: 6. Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished." In other words, it wasn’t a regional flood, it was universal. It was covered with water from one end of the globe to the other and it was utter destruction.

I think most people, in their study of the flood, miss the catastrophic part of it. And I want to go back just for a second to Genesis, and it’s just almost one verse that most of your preaching will totally ignore because it doesn’t make for the dramatic preaching material that a lot of people like to use.

You’ve all heard it. The water got ankle deep and a few people woke up and realized Old Noah knew what he was talking about. And then it wasn’t long and it was knee deep and a few more realized that Noah knew what he was talking about. And then it got a little deeper and it kept raining and it kept raining; and it kept getting deeper. And then, finally, when they were chin deep, then they started really almost pounding on the doors of the ark wanting to get in and have their salvation.

Well, you see, that’s not the way it was. It was not the rain that destroyed the population, but it’s in this verse right here. Genesis chapter 7 verse 11, and it was not just a gradual rising of rain water, this was a cataclysmic immediate destruction. All right, verse 11 of Genesis 7.

Genesis 7:11

"In the six-hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day (instantly) were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened." So what do you have? You had a cataclysmic eruption of all the powers and the energy from beneath that caused the tidal waves and the floods that destroyed everything. And then, of course with it,
you had the deluge from above. So, never lose sight of the fact that the flood was an instantaneous total destruction with all of the pent-up energy that rests within the globe. And we know that it's tremendous, the energy that is below the surface - we see it in volcanoes and earthquakes - the energy that is released.

The scientific world to this day will not admit to a universal flood. I remember when I taught Genesis in our early years on television. I challenged people, "If you ever see a college textbook that gives a definitive account of Noah’s flood, show it to me." And no one ever has and they can’t. **Because college textbooks will never admit a universal destroying flood such as Noah’s.**

And this is where the scoffers miss the point. They said that nothing had ever changed. Well, the flood changed everything! The flood took that tranquil tropical original earth and just utterly destroyed it - just brought it down to total devastation under the pressure of all that water. And then as the waters receded, according to God’s Sovereign dictate, we had the planet appear as we now know it today. And when you drive through the country and you see river valleys, and you see mountains, and you see deserts, always remind yourself that they were all formed as a result of the waters of Noah’s flood receding from the planet. And we have a complete inversion, then, of the numbers of square miles of water and land because, before the flood, it was mostly landmass and only a small amount of water - whereas today, we are three-quarters water and only one-quarter landmass. So the whole thing was totally inverted by Noah’s flood and yet these people are "willingly ignorant." **They will not admit that this cataclysmic event took place.** So coming back to II Peter chapter 3.

**II Peter 3:7a**

"But the heavens and the earth, which are now,..." Now, at Peter’s time, the earth is as it is now – the same rivers and the same mountains for the most part were on the scene in Peter’s day as we’ve got today.

**II Peter 3:7b**

"...by the same word (the Word of God) are kept in store,..." Now I’ve got to go back to Colossians, chapter 1 and we’ll begin with verse 15, as I need to tie these two Scriptures together.

**Colossians 1:15**

"Who (speaking of God the Son up there in verse 13) is the image (or the visible, physical appearance.) of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:" He was
before anything was ever on the scene - God the Son was already there. He’s from eternity past.

*Colossians 1:16*

"*For by him* (by the Son, Jesus of Nazareth as we know Him in the New Testament) *were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:*" That’s why when I’ve taught over and over, when they nailed the nails through His hands, those created beings were doing it to the One Who created them in the first place. The created beings, those Roman Soldiers, were nailing their own Creator on the cross. That’s what we’re looking at. So Colossians says, "*For by him are all things created.*" Now the verse I wanted to tie in with where we were in Peter:

*Colossians 1:17*

"*And he is before all things,* (he’s from eternity past. He didn’t just come on the scene in Bethlehem, He’s from eternity past with the rest of the Godhead) *and by him* (by the Son of God, by Jesus the Christ) *all things consist.*" (or are held together.)

Now back to II Peter 3:7 again. He is the "Word" now then, of II Peter that holds the whole universe together. And if He were to release the power of His word, we’d have instant cataclysmic destruction, which will happen at some point in the future.

*II Peter 3:7a*

"*But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store,*...." He’s keeping them intact, nothing is destroying itself. It’s all running in perfect harmony by His Word, but He’s reserving it; He’s keeping it for an eternal purpose out there in the future and that is what? An utter judgment.

*II Peter 3:7b*

"...reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." God’s judgment is going to fall again as it did back in the day of Noah; only, instead of with water, now it’s going to be destroyed with fire and energy. We don’t know the hour or day, but it’s going to happen. All right, verse 8.

*II Peter 3:8*
"But beloved, (now he comes back to the true believer. To the true Jewish believer and it’s apropos for us as well) be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." Now you can look at that in several different ways. I prefer to look at it that God can do in one day what He can do in a thousand years. He can spread out over a thousand years what He could do in a day. On the other hand, you can look at it that, with God, twenty-four hours is like a thousand years. Or a thousand years is like twenty-four hours. And so God is timeless.

In eternity there is no time. I pointed that out several months ago. There is no five minutes back, there’s no five minutes ahead. It’s the constant "now." And so, for God, a thousand years is nothing. This 2,000 years of Grace is just nothing more than a snap of the fingers. And so time means nothing to our Sovereign Creating God. All right, verse 9.

II Peter 3:9

"The Lord (the Creator, the Savior) is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering (His patience is beyond human understanding) to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." God is not willing that any should perish but it’s God’s will, it’s his desire that all should come to repentance. Or to a knowledge of salvation, but mankind won’t do it. God’s not going to force them, but he leaves the opportunity open - and you know you’ve heard me teach it over and over. If the plan of salvation required a million dollar payment, the world would work their fingers to the bone to get that million dollars. If it would cause people to climb a sheer cliff, five-six hundred feet to get their ticket to heaven, it’d be a line a mile long waiting for their chance. But that’s not what it is - it’s free. I always use John chapter 10, the door to the sheepfold, "I am the door. Any that would come in can come through me." And then I always ask the question, "Where’s the door to the sheep fold?" Up there on that high mountain? Across the river? No, it’s at ground level. It’s in front of every human being, every place they go. The door to the sheepfold is open, but they won’t take it. They rebel against it.

II Peter 3:10a

"But…" In spite of everything; in spite of all of God’s patience; in spite of His mercy and His grace; in spite of the fact that He was not willing that any should perish; but the day of judgment is coming.

II Peter 3:10
"But the Day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night: in the which the heavens (the universe) shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements (that which makes up matter) shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."

Now it’s not going to happen until after the thousand-year reign, of course, but that’s all included in the "last days." That’s why I put it on the board a little while ago, that, after the millennium has run its course and we’re ready for eternity, God’s going to destroy this whole ball of wax – I think the universe – now, I don’t get adamant about that but I think He’s going to call in the whole universe, from the same source that it went out in the first place. And then He’s going to re-create everything new.

Now you see, there’s a logical reason. Is there anything God has created that old Satan hasn’t defiled? I don’t think so. Satan has put his fingers of defilement on everything that God owns, including Heaven itself. So, in order to start out with something brand new with none of the fingerprints of Satan upon it, He’s going to destroy it all and re-create it. And I think that’s exactly what Peter’s talking about, but it won’t happen until after the thousand-year reign and before we slip into the eternal. Now then, verse 11. Peter is reminding us this is the case, this is the judgment of this universe that’s coming, and all the power of God will be exercised to bring it about:

*II Peter 3:11a*

"Seeing then that all these things (all part and parcel of creation) shall be dissolved,....." Now those of you who have had anything to do with chemistry, you’ll recognize immediately that these are terms of a laboratory. When you reduce things to solution and you dissolve – these are all scientific terms. All right, so:

*II Peter 3:11b*

"...what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation (or manner of living) and godliness." Well what’s the lesson? If we are living under the control and the love and the mercy of such a God Who can not only create this tremendous universe that’s beyond human understanding, but can also destroy it and pull it right back from whence it came and redo it - then goodness sakes why can’t we give Him His due? But mankind refuses to do it. They treat Him like some Santa Claus or as nothing at all. But Peter is admonishing the believers, "We understand whom we serve, we have an understanding of the God of Creation and it ought to prompt us to be godly in our living."
Now verse 12, all the while with this knowledge of creation and what is going to happen to it, we should be:

II Peter 3:12a

"Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God,..." All part of the Day of the Lord, coming from His first advent to the end of the millennium, these are all wrapped up in those two terms – the last days, and the Day of the Lord.

II Peter 3:12b

"...wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements (all of the matter of the universe) shall melt with fervent heat?" Oh my goodness, with our knowledge now of nuclear energy, this isn’t hard to believe, is it? All He has to do is release the atoms and everything self-destructs with tremendous heat. All so logical. Now verse 13.

II Peter 3:13

"Nevertheless, we, (as believers) according to his promise, (Not according to the prophets now, but to the Word of God, we) look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." Now again, I think, this is one reason I feel that Revelation was written earlier than most people think because John writes the same thing in Revelation. And even though the Holy Spirit is inspiring both men, I think it behooves us to realize that Peter must have had an idea of what John was talking about, so that he could understand as well. Let’s just look at some of those verses in Revelation so that we get Scriptural unfolding.

Revelation 20:7

"And when the thousand years (the Kingdom) are expired, (it’s run its course) Satan shall be loosed out of his prison," Now you want to remember, he’s going to be locked up all during the thousand-year Kingdom Age. That’s why it’ll be such a glorious period of Heaven on earth. All right, but when the thousand years have finished, Satan will be released for a short period of time.

Revelation 20:8

"And he will go out to deceive (seduce again the multitudes) the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, (in other words, from one end of the planet to the other) Gog and Magog, (again, which are intrinsic to the enemies of Israel, especially) to gather them together to battle: (just about like Armageddon all over
again) **the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.** And these rebels now (coming out of that thousand years of a glorious heaven on earth, with Christ as an absolute righteous King), will immediately rebel against the King, they will follow Satan.

**Revelation 20:9**

"And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: (which is Jerusalem again. But this time God doesn’t waste any time) and fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them." (That takes care of the rebels coming out of the millennial reign.) All right now here it comes. The end of time as we know it and the onset of eternity.

**Revelation 20:10-12a**

"And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast (the Anti-christ, that world ruler of the seven-year Tribulation) and the false prophet are, (after a thousand years they’re still there and the devil is cast in there with them) and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. 11. And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; (that’s Christ Himself now, sitting as Judge of all the lost of the ages,) and there was found no place for them. 12. And I saw the dead,...." All the way back from Cain to the last rebel of the millennial reign. Now these are the ones that we referred to a couple of programs back in John chapter 5, where Jesus said, "The just will be resurrected and the unjust will be resurrected." All right, here’s the resurrection then of the unbelieving world, the unjust.

**Revelation 20:12a**

"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; (and God in this case is Christ, the righteous Judge;) and the books (plural) were opened: (the record of everybody’s life on earth) and another book (singular) was opened, which is the book of life:...." Which showed the names of the true believers - and all these people will be given an opportunity to see that their name isn’t in it.

**Revelation 20:12b**

"...and the dead were judged out (their punishment was meted out accordingly) of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." That’s why punishment will vary in the lake of fire. It all depends on the unbeliever’s works while here on earth. **The sad part is, they don’t have to go there at all.**

**Revelation 20:13-15**
"And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the
dead which were in them: (they were all brought before this great White Throne
Judgment) and they were judged every man according to their works. 14. And death
and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. (that final
separation from their Creator God) 15. And whosoever was not found written in the
book of life was cast into the lake of fire." All right, that ends the whole 7,000 years
then of human history, as we’ve understood it. Now that’s why I went back and
recapped that so that when we come into chapter 21, John says:

Revelation 21:1

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven (which I think
envelops the whole universe) and the first earth were passed away; (they melted in
fervent heat) and there was no more sea." In other words, the new earth evidently is
going to be without benefit of oceans. It’ll be a total landmass if I’m not mistaken.
Verse 2.

Revelation 21:2

"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of
heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." Now this is the onset of
eternity. Eternity never ending - never changing. And, yet, we’ll never get bored. You
ever think of that? Once in a while, I think that, to go from here to eternity, it’s going
to get monotonous. No end? Nothing different to look to? But don’t worry about it.
God is going to make it so perfect, so glorious that, no, we’re not going to get bored.
We’re not going to wonder when it’s going to end because it’s going to be so glorious.
Well, then, over in chapter 22, we get a little more of this same thing about this new
heaven and new earth that’s coming.

Revelation 22:1

"And he shewed me a pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out
of the throne of God and of the Lamb." Now I don’t think this is to be spiritualized. I
don’t think this is a figure of speech, because you see the same thing happens when
Christ sets up the millennial Kingdom and He sets up His throne in Jerusalem. There’s
going to be a flow of fresh water out from underneath His throne room in Jerusalem,
out to the Dead Sea and will purify it. And it’s going to go, also, back out to the
Mediterranean - and on both sides of that river it’s going to be lush. And so we have a
repeat of it now in the new heaven and this new earth and, again, we have a pure river
of water coming out of the very throne of God and the Lamb. See? We’ll also have a
repeat of the tree of life in verse 2. And so we have a repeat of many things here,
but now everything will be all new. No curse. No fingerprints of old Satan upon
it. And it’s going to be glorious beyond our comprehension. And that’s what we’re waiting for. That’s what we’re looking for. And it’s going to be here before we know it.
Lesson Three • Part IV

The Mark of False Teachers and Scoffers

II Peter 2:9 – 3:18

We’d just like to thank you for joining with us in this taping as hopefully we’ll finish II Peter in this one and be ready for I John in our next taping when we begin book number 56. We hope you like this classroom effect. We’ve had more than one letter that said, "I almost feel like I’m back in college again sitting in a classroom." And that’s all we want to do is just simply teach the Book and hopefully make it understandable so that folks can study it on their own. Okay, let’s pick up where we left off in II Peter chapter 3 and we’re down there at verse 14.

II Peter 3:14a

"Wherefore,…." Because of all that we know from the Word of God is going to happen and nothing is going to stop it. We don’t claim to know when, but it is coming,

II Peter 3:14a

"Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, (in other words, the end of time and the whole operation of this planet and the human race, the human experience is going to come to an end) be diligent...." In other words, don’t take these things haphazardly. Be serious about it. God is real. God is genuine. He’s Sovereign. He’s in control. And His Word is true. You know, I think that’s what people are finding out – the more you study this Book, the more you realize that it is the Word of God. The meticulous way it’s been put together. **It’s just impossible for mortal men to have done the things that are evident when you study the Scripture.**

People who scoff at the Scripture are usually people who have never studied it. They have never come to realize the little intricacies that are so evident for those of us who do study - and so this is what Peter is telling his folks - "be diligent." Because, like he said back in chapter 1 in this same book, "we’re not following cunningly devised fables." Yeah, turn back with me a minute because that says it so well. Still in II Peter but back to chapter 1 verse 16. Just remind yourself of this constantly.

II Peter 1:16a

"For we have not followed cunningly devised fables,..." These aren’t just campfire stories, and legends. These are not things that have been concocted by men’s ideas.
II Peter 1:16b

"...when we made known unto you the power and the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitneses of his majesty." Peter is speaking from first hand experience. All right, now come back to where we just were in chapter 3. And so he says, again:

II Peter 3:14b

"...be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace,..." Now that’s the joy of the believer that we have peace with God. We don’t have to worry about the life to come because we know that we’re already His.

II Peter 3:14c

"...without spot, and blameless." Well, now we can’t gain that by our own endeavor, so again it goes back to what the Scriptures tell us that we’re "washed by that shed blood of Christ. We’re declared forgiven." And we have nothing against us. We’re blameless.

Now that word rings a bell. Come back with me to I Corinthians chapter 1, and this is a verse that some people don’t like. It rubs them wrong and I can’t help that. We stand on what the Book says. Remember the Corinthians were the most carnal of any of the congregations that Paul had established. They were babes in Christ. They had a lot of problems. A lot of people today would say they weren’t even Christians, but that’s not what the Book says.

I Corinthians 1:4-6

"I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you (to these Corinthians) by Jesus Christ; 5. That in everything ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, (every word they spoke reflected their new life in Christ) and in all knowledge; 6. Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you:" In other words, they came out of their pagan background; their lives were transformed, and they became testimonies of God’s saving grace. Now verse 7.

I Corinthians 1:7

"So that ye come behind in no gift; (everything that was potentially there was for them to enjoy) waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ:" Remember when we taught the introduction in the book of James? Even Paul and his followers thought
that the Body of Christ would be Raptured before the Tribulation would begin, and it still will be.

*I Corinthians 1:8*

"Who shall also confirm (or make everything absolute) you unto the end, (He’s never going to let go of you. Why?) that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." In other words, the true believer. Even though we may fail from day to day, yet, when the Lord comes and if we’re suddenly alive and remain and are translated, we will never stand before the Lord with sin to confess. "We’re going to be blameless" – automatically! And that isn’t license for loose living. No way, shape, or form! But we are in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ - when we’re translated into His presence, we will be immediately "blameless."

Now we’re still going to come before the Lord for the judgment of reward for what we’ve done in our bodies - but we are never going to have to shake in our boots before the Lord, having sin to deal with. That will be automatically cleansed and removed.

All right, back to II Peter now then, verse 15. Now here are verses that some of you probably think I run into the ground, but when I saw these verses several years ago, I thought, "This is what I’ve been looking for!" Because a lot of people get on my case for making too much of Paul and his writings. They’re going to follow Peter because, after all, Peter spent three years with Jesus. Peter understood everything that He said and did, so they think, "I’ll follow Peter, not Paul." (Although by inspiration Paul wrote to us several times that we were to be followers of him.) And I know people don’t like that, but that’s what the Word proclaims.

But, here we have that same Peter, admonishing even his Jewish followers that, if they want true salvation (that is, I think he’s speaking in terms of days to come, and without really knowing himself how much time he has left to instruct them. And he didn’t realize that all these things are not going to be culminated. The Spirit knew that we were going to go on into a 2,000-year period of grace, so with that in mind, the Spirit must have inspired Peter to tell his people that, for salvation) go to Paul’s writings.

*II Peter 3:15a*

"And account (or understand) that the longsuffering (the patience) of our Lord is salvation;..." Now we’ve stressed this before. From Genesis, especially chapter 3, when Adam and Eve have fallen - all the way from Genesis clear through to the end
of the human experience, the whole heart of God is the salvation of the human being."

Like we saw in our last program, God’s not willing that any should perish. Well, if He didn’t want them to perish, what did He want them to have? Salvation! And salvation is saved from eternal doom, but also saved unto a life of service and love for the Creator, for the Savior - however you want to refer to Him. All right, so Peter now, writing to Jewish believers, is reminding them that:

**II Peter 3:15b**

"...even as our beloved brother Paul...." Now just stop and think a minute. That took some doing - come back with me to Galatians chapter 2 - another portion that we use so often. But again, most people will have nothing to do with it, because it shows so explicitly the difference between Peter’s ministry and Paul’s. Peter was an apostle of Israel along with the Eleven. Paul is the apostle of the Gentiles, totally separated; and never can you mix the two all together. Keep them separated, and this Bible is as plain and easy to understand as anything can be.

All right, so in Galatians chapter 2:

**Galatians 2:9a**

"And when James, Cephas, (Peter) and John...." Now, it’s amazing, that’s not the way we normally speak of them, is it? Normally it’s Peter, James and John. But here it’s James and Peter and John – so James is in the place of superiority now. And these guys:

**Galatians 2:9b**

"...who seemed to be pillars,...." What does that mean? Well they weren’t what they thought they were. Now back in the early days of the Jerusalem church, back there in Acts chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5; they were pillars of the Jerusalem church. Everything rested on those twelve men as they were proclaiming the Good News to the Jews, that Jesus the Christ was the Messiah, Whom you killed, but God raised from the dead.

All right, so they were the kingpins. In fact, it says so plainly that when these Jews (even Barnabas who had land on the island of Cyprus, sold it. What’s he do with the proceeds? Brought it and laid it at the feet of the apostles) were the ones that were in control of everything. They were the ones that were preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom. They were the ones administering that common kitty out of which these Jewish believers got whatever they needed, and no one lacked. And so they were the
pillars of the Jerusalem church. But now you see, when we get to about 51 AD, which is about 30-some years after Pentecost, Paul, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, tells us that "they seemed to be pillars." They weren’t, But they thought they were.

Well, why weren’t they? Because the whole Jewish program is falling apart because of Israel’s unbelief; and they’re not coming to believe in Jesus as the Messiah. Instead, they’re turning more and more to unbelief - and even in Paul’s own experience - twice in the book of Acts when he tried to appeal to the Jewish people and they rebelled against him, what did he say? "From henceforth we go to the Gentiles."

Remember when Paul got to Rome, and he called for the Jewish leadership of Rome, and they came to where he was under house arrest and, again, he pleaded to them on the basis of Who Jesus Christ really was and how they had rejected it? "But they believed him not." And so in Acts 28:28, what does Paul say?

*Acts 28:28*

"Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it." All right, so as Israel is continuing to reject Christ’s Kingdom and His authority as their Messiah, it’s all falling apart. Falling through the cracks is the way I always explain it. But the Twelve don’t know it yet. And so the Twelve were no longer the pillars that they had been. There was nothing there to "pillar" and that’s why Paul uses that. Now continuing on with verse 9 in Galatians:

*Galatians 2:9b*

"...who seemed to be pillars, perceived (or understood) the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; (A gentleman’s agreement. And here was the agreement) that we should go unto the heathen, (Gentiles) and they unto the circumcision." (Israel) Now that’s as plain as language can make it. Paul and Barnabas were designated to be the apostles of the Gentiles. Peter and the Eleven are the apostles of Israel. We’ll stay with the Jew; you go to the Gentile. Gentleman’s agreement. And like I’ve said over and over, what kind of a cad would Peter have been if he’d turned right around after a gentleman’s agreement and started ministering to Gentiles? He would have gone against his own word. But he didn’t. There is nothing in Scripture to indicate that Peter ever went into a ministry with the Gentiles. He stayed with Israel.

All right, now let’s come on down into the Scriptures here in Galatians. So, this counsel ends on a good note and Paul and Barnabas go back, merrily on their way, to their Gentile ministry, and Peter and the Eleven are going to continue there with Israel.
in Jerusalem. Remember their salvation messages - Peter’s to the Jews was that believing that Jesus was the Son of God, their Messiah, repentance and water baptism. Paul’s salvation message to us Gentiles is believe in your heart that Jesus died for your sins, was buried and rose again, as we see in I Corinthians 15:1-4. That may not seem all that much different, but for us today, Paul tells us in Galatians chapter 1, it’s the difference between Heaven and Hell. Okay, now verse 11.

Galatians 2:11

"But when Peter was come to Antioch, (sometime later, years later I think - and he came visiting up at Antioch as a representative of the Jewish church in Jerusalem, Paul says) Iwithstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed." I think he had to jump on a soapbox to do it, but Peter was eyeball to eyeball with Paul, and Paul was upset. Now we’re pretty confident that Paul had a temper of sorts. He could get real upset and here was one of those times. He was upset with Peter to no end and, "I withstood him to the face because he was to be blamed." He was at fault. Verse 12, and here’s why.

Galatians 2:12

"For before that certain came from James, (that is when Peter was visiting up here at Antioch with this Gentile congregation. But while he’s there, some Jews come down from Jerusalem, from the Jerusalem church. And so he says) he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision." (the Jews) Peter had now come to realize that Paul’s converts were just as much in God’s fold as any Jew could be, and so he ate with the Gentiles. But, when these Jews came from Jerusalem, Peter (bless his heart, and you know what you have to think of? The little maid at the fire when Jesus was on trial. Peter must have been a big guy but he must have had a weak will because you see as soon as these people came from Jerusalem, Peter) chickened out. He should have just dug his heels in and said, "Listen, there’s no reason why I shouldn’t eat with these believing Gentiles." But he chickened out, and because of those men from Jerusalem, "he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were the Jews."

In other words Peter was fearing them who were of the circumcision. Peter was human, wasn’t he? He was afraid of what these Jews would take back to Jerusalem. And what would they take back? I can hear them now. "Do you know what Peter is doing? He’s back eating with Gentiles again. He’s back in those ham sandwiches, just like he was when he was up at Cornelius’ house."

Acts 11:1-3
"And the apostles, and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. 2. And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, 3. Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them."

Well, the same thing here. Same thing all over again. and Peter chickens out. He should have just stood up and said, "Look, we’re all believers, we’re all serving the same Christ." But he didn’t. "And so he feared those who were of the circumcision" from the Jerusalem church. Now verse 13.

Galatians 2:13,14a

"And the other Jews (who were converts and members of Paul’s and Barnabas’ Antioch congregation,) dissembled likewise with him; (in other words, they pulled out with Peter. And now this is the one that’s hard to believe.) insomuch that (even) Barnabas (who was back in that first counsel meeting when him and Paul shook hands with Peter, James, and John, to keep separate, Gentiles and the Jews, also was carried away with their dissimulation. (or their false ideas) 14a. But (Paul writes) when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel,.…." What’s he referring to? Well, part and parcel of Paul’s Gospel of grace is that there is no difference. A Jew is just as much in need of salvation as a Gentile. And when he becomes a believer, he’s just as much a member of the Body of Christ as a Gentile. And so that’s what Paul is saying. They didn’t walk uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel. And so he said:

Galatians 2:14b

"...I said unto Peter before them all, (an open public rebuke and it must have been humiliating) If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?" Now that’s almost a double-talk there, but what you’ve got is: "Now Peter, you’re a Jew and you’ve been eating with these Gentiles. And you’ve been recognizing that there really is no difference. Now, if that’s the case, why do you now all of a sudden compel the Gentiles to live as the Jews?" And that came up in that counsel back here, ahead of all this where they agreed that Paul and Barnabas would go to the Gentiles.

So anyway, here Peter has been publicly rebuked by the little Apostle Paul - and I think Paul was a little short fellow. And now, look what he says - and here’s why I have to admire Peter, how he can come right back in Christian love and oversight of what Paul had done years back, and now, by inspiration remember, the Holy Spirit prompts him to write this:
II Peter 3:15b

"...even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you;" Now, he’s talking to Jews, and there’s only one portion of Scripture that Paul wrote to Jews and what would that be? The book of Hebrews.

And so, from this, I’m quite adamant that Paul wrote Hebrews. And it was directed to Jews who were having a hard time coming out of Judaism and stepping into this Gospel of Grace. All right, but don’t stop there. Now verse 16... and not just in Hebrews:

II Peter 3:16a

"As also in all his epistles, (Romans through Philemon) speaking in them of these things;... (what things? Salvation. As we started Hebrews a couple of years ago, what was the first thing I said? You won’t find the plan of salvation in Hebrews. There’s not a Roman Road in Hebrews. It’s not in there. You won’t find the plan of salvation laid out in Acts. You won’t find it laid out in these little Jewish epistles. It’s not in there. And if you want the plan of salvation for us in the Age of Grace, you’ve got to find it between Romans 1:1 and the last verse of Philemon and it’s in there over and over and over, how that Jesus died for our sins, was buried, and rose again.

And Peter is reminding us that if you want salvation in this Age of Grace, you go to Paul’s epistles. That’s Peter speaking. Now, if I could just get some of these people that jump all over me for making too much of Paul to read this, and realize that Peter made just as much of Paul as I do. Peter says, "if you want true salvation, you go to Paul’s epistles," and I say the same thing. If you want to know the real Christian walk in this Age of Grace, you go to Paul’s epistles. If you want to know the end of the Church on this earth, you go to Paul’s epistles; it’s the only place you’ll find it. All right, and so he says:

II Peter 3:16a

"As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; (here goes the heart of Peter again) in which (in Paul’s epistles) are some things hard to be understood,..." How could a man with Peter’s experience - with Peter’s walk with the Lord, with Peter’s clout in the church at Jerusalem - tell the whole world that he had problems understanding some of Paul’s writings? Quite an admission wasn’t it? I think he was so steeped in that legalism of Judaism that he just simply had a hard time dropping some of that stuff and stepping into Paul’s Gospel of Grace because it’s not easy departing from the Jewish way.
That’s the problem with most people today. They cannot drop some of that "works religion" and take these things by faith-plus-nothing that Paul shares with us. It rubs against the grain and Peter admits it by the inspiration of the Spirit. All right, but now reading on:

II Peter 3:16b

"...which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, (the scoffers again, the false teachers - if they use Paul’s stuff, at all, they’re going to twist it all out of shape) as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction." Now the amazing thing I pick up on in that statement is, "...the other scriptures...." What is Peter putting on Paul’s epistles? The stamp of inspiration. It’s just as much Scripture as what Moses wrote. What Paul writes is just as much the Word of God as what the prophets wrote. It’s just as much the Word of God as what Peter wrote or what Jesus said. Or anybody else. It’s all Scripture, according to Scripture.

All right, and so they’ve twisted these things, "even as they do also the other scriptures." Not just Paul’s, but they twist all of them to their own destruction. All right, now I hope I’ve made my point that Peter admonishes the people today to go to Paul’s epistles; whereas most of Christendom says, go to Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Acts. Evidently, that’s what they tell them because that’s where all the preaching is. But Peter doesn’t do that. Peter says, **"You go to Paul’s epistles, for, in them, is where we know we can find eternal life!"** All right, now then, one more verse. Verse 17.

II Peter 3:17a

"Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked,..." Now he comes right back to those false teachers that we’ve talked about earlier. Don’t fall into the error of the wicked and thereby:

II Peter 3:17b-18

"...fall from your own stedfastness. 18. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen."