



EYEWITNESSES OF HIS MAJESTY THE PROTECTION OF GOD

A Study of II Peter



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EYEWITNESSES OF HIS MAJESTY – THE PROTECTION OF GOD
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LESSON #1: “The Protection of Belonging” II Peter 1:1-9

When we study the Bible, we need to understand the length, the breadth, the depth, and the height of God’s protection. It is easy to focus on just what seems to threaten our peace, our health and our security at the immediate time. It seems we can focus only on the need for God’s protection in that area. But God is not a God of only protecting where we think we need help, God in His sovereignty and providence constantly works in His creation to uphold, guide, and care for all of His creation.

That is the theme of the two Bible books written by Peter, I Peter and II Peter. He was teaching the Gentile Christians who were being persecuted by those opposed to Christianity that God protects in ways they did not see. I find it insightful that Peter did not focus on their strength and resiliency; nor did he focus on their ability to hide or blend in with their persecutors; but over and over Peter told them about the protection of God. If you are facing crisis or a series of crisis in your life right now and feel the things against you are more powerful than you, then this study on II Peter is the right study for you.

By what authority is Peter telling them to depend on the protection of God? He says it is by the very authority of Jesus Christ Himself and that authority was given to them when Jesus was on the earth and Peter and two other disciples witnessed the tremendous power that belonged to Jesus. His exact words are: “For we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty.” He received honor and glory from God the Father, when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, “*This is my Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased.*” *We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.*” **I Peter 1:16-18**

I want us to take the advice of this great Apostle of Jesus, the first preacher of the Church; and the man God chose to launch the Church and see what he saw about God’s protection that allowed him to stand up to authorities, rulers and those desiring to kill him. I think we have a lot to learn in these nine weeks of study about the ‘Protection of God’.

Dr. David Reagan in his book, Christ in Prophecy lists 6 categories of end-time signs and I want to list a few tonight to show the immediate relevance and absolute need for the protection of God.

1. Increased Instability of Nature—*Matthew 24:7* and *Luke 21:11*

This has become such a problem in our time that the world is hastily devising ways to change nature. The goal of ‘climate control’ is to restore a world where nature is in balance with what the world thinks nature should be.

2. Increasing Lawlessness and Violence—*Matthew 24:12*

This has also become such a problem that even in the United States we have had several movements; Black Lives Matter and Blue Lives Matter are two that come to mind

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immediately to deal with the issues. The crime rate in the US continues to climb and the solution for most is just finger pointing.

3. Increasing Immorality—*Matthew 24:37*

One of the arguments for legalizing many things: gambling, abortion, use of marijuana, etc. has been that making it legal will eliminate all the broken laws and make our nation more moral. After the fact of watching those ideas lived out, does anyone believe that there is any truth in that argument?

4. Increasing Materialism—*II Timothy 3:2*

The government programs to help businesses of all kinds with money during Covid, many authorities tell us, will be the reason for the biggest fraud ever seen in the United States.

5. Increased Hedonism—*II Timothy 3:4*

Our nation leads the world in producing pornography, lewd forms of visual entertainment, and a focus on all-things-sexual.

6. Increasing Influence of Humanism—*II Timothy 3:2*

Each one of the first five signs I have listed have led to an increase in the influence of humanism. Humanism has become the answer to almost all problems in our nation by our leaders.

So, I want us to start where Peter did as he addressed this group of persecuted Christians and claim all the protection of God.

Christians Have the Right Foundation for Protection

In *II Peter 1:1-2*, Peter lays out what is the right foundation for always having the protection of God. He reminded all that we have received salvation by “*Divine Will*” and just like the chosen replacement of Judas as a disciple by the casting of lots and the choosing of Mathias, so we did not have anything to do with the earning or deserving of our salvation. It was not our personal effort, skill, worthiness, or even our inherent value that got us saved. It was the righteousness of Jesus and His gift of faith to us that led us to believe.

Peter says that the faith we received from Christ and the salvation that followed were identical to the faith and salvation that he and the other disciples received. Those converted later were just as precious, they were even like-precious. There are no first-class or second-class Christians in social, racial, or gender distinctions. There are no rankings of Christians in the spiritual world either. Some may do more with the faith and salvation that they have received, but that does not make their faith and salvation superior. Peter was addressing Gentile Christians and he may have been very explicit on this point to show them that they had received the same faith and salvation as the Christian Jew.

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This foundation has all been laid for every Christian by Jesus Christ. He is both God and our Savior. This foundation is right for protection because it is built on the knowledge of Jesus as Savior and Lord. Christianity is not a mystical religion based on feelings and incantations, although the Holy Spirit can direct us at all times. Christianity is a faith that is based on objective, historical, revealed, and rational truth from God. Christianity was given by God to be understood and believed. It is the understanding and knowledge of Christianity that expands the 'deeper, wider, longer and higher' acceptance of the protection of God.

Each one of us who is a believer, saved by God-given faith and belief in Jesus Christ have this foundation. Now let's look at what that protection does for us.

Christians Have the Right Promises to Live and Experience That Protection

In **II Peter 1:3-4**, Peter gets right too it. He reminds us all that the key to God's protection is not something we are or are not doing, but it is something that Jesus has already done. He has put us in the Family of God and God will protect us.

My heart was broken to see Afghan mothers trying to hand their babies over the fences at the Kabul airport to try and get the US soldiers to take them home to the USA to freedom. We have had a mass movement of people all over the world who are breaking up the traditional family unit to try and save their children or to allow the children to prosper and come back and rescue them. We have seen it often in Ukraine, where the elderly or those who cannot fight in the war with Russia take the children, sometimes very little babies and flee with them to find freedom and life for these little ones in a NATO country. We have watched for years the increasing number of teenagers and younger children that have come from Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras to our Southern border without any family or adults accompanying them to try and find asylum in the United States. In our present world the family unit has frequently been broken in a human effort to save the next generation.

That will never happen to us spiritually. God does not break up His family. One of the great characteristics of God's protection is that God says all believers always belong to His family. You do not get different rules for different stages of your life. The promises of God are as truthful for you when you die physically as they were when you died to sin and self at your conversion. One of the main protections that our God gives to us is that He has assured us that He will never give up on someone who is willing to let the Holy Spirit speak to their heart. God never quits on anyone unless they spiritually rebuke or deny Him.

The Bible makes it clear and Jesus confirmed the truth, because the first promise of God was that He would send a Redeemer or the Jewish name, a Messiah, to rescue willing humans from the sin that Adam and Eve had just committed in the Garden of Eden. God's Words were: *"And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. He shall bruise you on the head and you shall bruise Him on the heel."* **Genesis 3:15**

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This is the Bible's very first Messianic prophecy. These words were spoken by God to Satan after he had tempted Adam and Eve to sin against God and they did. It is a remarkable statement of God's unbelievable and unfathomable grace. Despite their rebellion, God reveals that He will provide a way of reconciliation with Adam and Eve and their offspring. It will come through the Seed of Woman, referring only to Jesus Christ who would be born of a virgin. He states that Satan will "*bruise*" the Messiah "*on the heel*" a non-lethal lasting wound represented by the cross, non-lethal in the sense that it was quickly overcome through the Resurrection. The very basis of our promised protection that death is no longer something that a believer must fear. But God further states that the Messiah or Redeemer will "*bruise Satan*" on the head, the lethal wound at the Messiah's Second Coming when Satan will be bound and ultimately cast into the Lake of Fire at the end of the Messiah's millennial reign.

That is one of those wonderful promises that guarantee the protection of God upon all of His believers and allows people to see that God has always intended to protect His children. Christians are promised every one of these promises because they become "*new creations*" with the Holy Spirit living in them and He will guide them through this life and into the time when they realize and receive their 'glorified bodies' and have the mind and desires of Christ in their lives. This will be the final insulation for any invasion of corruption, falling back under the influence and direction of sin. If we live under and accept all the precious promises of God, it will never happen.

We Have the Right Place for All Those Protections to Be Realized

In **II Peter 1:5-9**, Peter declares that this must be the motivation for our Christian life. Good works and our righteousness did not save us and it will not be what keeps us in Christ. We do not do good because we are Christians, we do good because God has given us His precious promises of protection and they guide us to goodness. We have not reached our goal when we are converted, we have reached the starting point where God and us will have a totally different relationship. God has given us all that we need and we need to give Him our maximum effort.

We are to add to our faith. The word "add" here means, "give lavishly and generously" In the Greek language it stood for the choirmaster who furnished everything the choir needed to do a great job. It was not about individual accomplishments but it represented the fact that one should prepare as well as possible so that they would give a great life to God and to those around them. So, Peter begins to list those characteristics that would allow us to produce the life that maximizes the protection of God and focus on:

1. **Being Virtuous**, heroic in helping others and being excellent in all we do.
2. **Knowledge**, that we are versed and trained in God's Word and applying it to our life.
3. **Self-controlled**, think of the self-discipline needed by an athlete to perform at their very best.
4. **Perseverance**, always doing what is right.
5. **Godliness**, to be reverent, loyal and obedient to God.

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Peter then turns and reminds everyone that this focus on growing in the Lord and His protection must also affect our attitudes towards others and it needs to be filled with brotherly love and an overall attitude of love towards all.

You see when we are in a right relationship with God, we are in a place to receive all of His protection. Every precious promise of God is one more special gift for us and it propels us to be even better and move even closer to Him.

God's Protection is a Special Gift

When Sharon and I were in Melbourne Australia; I went on a tour of a nature preserve right outside of Melbourne to see several different species that we might not see in the wild just touring the country. Of course, I wanted to see and did see some fabulous Koala bears. But the entertainers of the preserve were the kangaroos. They would move into and out of straight rows of bushes that were planted every 100 yards apart and play a game of hide and seek with us. I took the opposite approach and went back through the bush row and sure enough here came several kangaroos and I snapped my best pictures of the day. Especially one of a cute little Joey sticking his head and shoulders out of mom's pouch to see how the kangaroos were faring in the game. As soon as I took the picture and he and his mother spotted me, he dove back into the pouch and she went hopping off.

I see that as a great figure of the protection of God. When our curiosity gets the best of us, we might move to the edge of the protection of God; but when we sense danger or alarm, we all burrow back into the place where we are the closest to God. Living in light of His full protection, literally that you belong to Him will allow that to be your approach to all of life. A desire to get closer to God for all of my earthly life and then let my life blend into His protection and direction for eternity.

Peter closes the passage by reminding all who read it that this special place of God's protection is a "Special Gift of God" that should spur us on to draw closer to Him. The one who does not value this special place of protection from God, simply because you belong to Him, has amnesia and a useless mind. I might say retarded but Peter merely says, "nearsighted and blind."

When I was a boy growing up on the farm, we milked several cows and we never trained our cows to come to the barn by themselves not did we keep them in the lot by the barn. So, getting the cows for evening milking was a job for one or both of the boys. One summer afternoon, mom asked my brother Howard and I to go get the cows and it was almost one-half mile back to the pasture where they were. We were dressed in our normal summer outfits: cut off blue jean shorts. No shoes, no shirt, and no jackets. We did not rush to get the cows and by the time we got back to the field a large ominous cloud had started moving rapidly towards us from the West. We tried in vain to get the cows to start up to the barn, but they sensed a storm, turned their heads away from the storm and stayed in the field. Soon, the sheets of rain started to pound on our bare backs and so we headed for the woods—as we called them, about 80 trees all clumped together along the creek bank and found some shelter behind a large tree. We moved from that tree back further in the woods right before it was struck by lightning and splintered all the way to the ground. The rain was not letting up and we were getting

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quite worried, 7 and 8-year-old boys, no matter how physically large they are, are not ready to weather this kind of a storm.

Then we heard a voice, in the middle of the rain calling out, “Tom, Howard, Tom, Howard, where are you?” and we saw it was our mother struggling through the storm with some old farm jackets in her hand. We ran out of the woods and got our jackets had a few hugs and headed back towards the house. Yes, we did not get the cows, they still weren’t ready to move and we could do that later. We all celebrated our big adventure when we got back to the house, dried out, got warm, and put on more clothes to go back and get the cows for real. Actually, they were entering the barn lot when we jumped over the gate fence and we didn’t have to go very far.

Years later, after the older three children had left home, we were talking about phobias and mother told us that she was so happy that none of the three of us had picked up her fear and phobia of storms. Her childhood farm house had an inner room with no windows and when it was storming, she told us that she would go into that room, shut the doors and just shake in fear until the storm was over. Almost immediately I remembered the storm and mom rescuing us boys and asked her how she had overcome her phobia and fear enough to come get us. She looked at me and said, “Those were my boys! Those were my boys. I just had to come and get you.” If our earthly parents with their human frailties could protect us that much, can you imagine what our All-powerful God can do to protect us and preserve us?

We belong to God and God is quite aware of that. Peter says, to remember that God lines our lives with the precious promises of His protection and we are in the place to receive those. We need to let the Lord build on that foundation in our life and live in that protection

Dr. Randy Guliuzza, President of the Institute for Creation Research wrote: “The revelation of the personal ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ is the central message of the Bible. Like bookends for Biblical revelation, we find the Lord Jesus created all things at the beginning and is reigning over all things at the final consummation. Creation and consummation are two works of the Lord that are, by necessity, linked together as Paul explains who Christ is in **Colossians 1**. Paul links the fact that Christ is first the Creator of “*all things*” and continues as the Sustainer of “*all things*” and thus has full authority, in every sense, to be the legitimate Redeemer of “*all things*.” He has full authority over everything that includes protection of His own.

Let me end with that Scripture: “*The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created, things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And He is the head of the body, the church, he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.*” **Colossians 1:15-20.**

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He protects us because He came to do that for every believer.

Our Next Lesson will study how God “Protects Through His Constant Confirmation.” We will study // ***Peter 1:10-18***. I think it will be a great encouragement to you.

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LESSON #2: “The Protection of Constant Confirmation” II Peter 1:10-18

In this lesson, we will take an in depth look at how God protects us through confirmation. We all long for confirmation. I can tell you that I would have called myself at one stage of my adulthood a “people pleaser” but I was really a “confirmation seeker”. I wanted people that I respected and valued to respect and value me. I longed to hear them say those very words and even though I was quite successful at the time in any way you might measure success in the ministry. I longed to hear those confirmations directed towards me, my ministry, my family, my talents—you name it. I was a border-line confirmation addict.

Do you know what happened? I found out that some of the people from whom I intently sought their confirmation were really not even genuine friends and they used my willingness to be helpful and kind as a means to undermine what I was doing. I was hired into a setting where the previous long-term pastor had maintained his standing and popularity with fake flattery and had trained a rather large church that that was what they could and should expect from the lead pastor. I had never seen this level of duplicity let alone been in the middle of it and my bent toward being a “confirmation seeker” became a real problem for me working with the congregation.

It was at that point that I thought, my many counseling classes at graduate and doctoral level Seminary had not prepared me to enter a world where you were evaluated by how outlandishly you could flatter people. I took my Bible and began to study to find something that would help me to be a better lead pastor and was amazed at what I found.

Protection Confirmation Comes from God, Not Others

God never encouraged us to seek the confirmations of other people. He told us to unify, work as a team, and keep our pride and arrogance in check; but He warned us over and over that seeking confirmation from others could lead to problems and it could backfire in any situation. He instead told us to find our confirmation in Him. I understood the thought but did not see how that would work. I always felt the presence and leadership of God in my life and ministry but seldom heard the words of confirmation that I thought I needed directly from God. It is the answer that I found in II Peter that I want to share with you in this study. The confirmation will come from God in the original promise of God, but the protection of the confirmation comes when you confirm yourself by claiming what God says you now have in Him. He makes the whole “Protection by Confirmation” a new process. It has little to do with psychology and a lot to do with faith and trust in what the Lord has promised that He will do.

We have to take it out of the concept of “people pleasing” and a focus on our feelings. It is possible for feelings to become so intense that they weigh on us continually. Anyone who is experiencing PTSD knows that. PTSD is a clinical term for any terrifying or shocking experience that causes memories of a traumatic experience and the feelings that it caused to produce flashbacks, nightmares, and severe anxiety. It often causes people to lose hope. Satan knows that and he plays on the spiritual PTSD moments we have by reminding us of our sin and our unworthiness. **Jeremiah 31** and **Hebrews 8:12**

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and **Hebrews 10:17** tell us clearly that God does not remember our sins and lawless deeds anymore. He cannot be the source of any of our spiritual PTSD. God does not cause anxiety for His followers; He relieves and releases it.

We live in an era when the effects of discouragement and despair are all evident to each of us. Many of the addictive natures are fueled by the fact that people do not feel confirmed by God or others and therefore are not able to confirm themselves by the promises of God.

I've seen many people become so enamored with their own learning that they leave the idea that the Word of God is the direction book for their life and they blend culture, present thoughts, and spiritual sayings together and declare "that it works for them." So, the very basic teachings at the start of the Bible are clear directives:

- God is the Creator of all
- God created man with the knowledge that man would 'miss the mark' or sin
- He promised a Redeemer
- God created men and women as two very distinct and different beings
- God put marriage in the context of male/female

Basic Teachings of God to Claim & Receiver 'Protection Confirmation'

I have chosen three very basic teachings of God in the early chapters of Genesis that teach us part of what God intended for "the nature of being for mankind", called Ontology. Perhaps because God was so clear about several of these very basic teachings of the nature of being, that Satan has hurled his most pointed attacks in these areas.

Let me continue about what I learned from **II Peter** in the area of confirmation. It is right there in:

II Peter 1:9 *"Therefore, my brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your calling and election. For if you do these things, you will never stumble."*

There it was, right before my eyes. God did not want me to seek the confirmation of others. He wanted me to seek the confirmations that come from His promises and to claim them for myself. I was to remember that I was His child and I had been given all the promises of my Father. My Father and your Father, our Father, God has given a lot of promises.

The first statement I want you to claim and receive to have the 'Protection of Confirmation' is:

1. God has Given Believers Confirmation; They Belong to Him!

We need to decide where we are going. Are we willing to risk our life, our feelings, and our emotions on the confirmations that may or may not come from other people; or are we willing to first of all trust that God has chosen us and confirmed us as His child and remind ourselves of that all the time.

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When NASA launched the Saturn I rocket on missions to land a man on the moon in the 1960's, technology was pushing the envelope. To this day, the audacity of what American engineers pulled off with rudimentary computers and slide-rule calculations boggles the mind.

It may seem obvious that flight controllers simply needed to point the giant rocket at the moon and light the engine. But the actual flight planning was much more complicated. In order to arrive at the proper spot to enter lunar orbit, without slamming into the moon or straying off into inter planetary space, astronauts had to know exactly where the mission began and where they were throughout the flight.

Most people today are hurtling through life without giving much thought to where they are going. Their apparent indifference about their destination follows their apathy about their origin and therefore they dismiss where they are right now spiritually and morally.

We have been called to have an eternal perspective. We realize that this life is not "all there is" and that God created us and saved us to outlive this mortal life. Having put our trust in Jesus Christ, we know who we are and we also know where we are going. And trusting in His promises after man's sin and believing the Bible about the beginning of civilization; we know where we began as a species and why so much sin and suffering are a part of our world today.

Some followers of Christ foolishly discount the importance of appreciating our origins as a species and as a believer. But God revealed His firsthand account of the creation because He wanted us to understand:

- a) How and why, we were created,
- b) The state of the earth before Man's fall into sin,
- c) The reason for the curse upon the earth
- d) The promise of a Deliverer to set all things right again.

That is the very basis upon which we can trust that God has confirmed that we belong to Him.

****God saved us before we were good; redeemed us before we sinned, or expressed repentance or were baptized; and promised us an eternal home before we were even born. That is intense confirmation!!!**** That will hold up in any crisis and trial. God has done everything we need to accept his confirmation promises and it was all done before we even entered life.

Some also show surprisingly little interest in Jesus' revelation about the end. They live in the here and now, resigned to the expectation that it will all pan out in time. Again, God chose to reveal His plan for His people to give us hope, and to alert us to the signs we should be watching for in the last days. Read the prophecy passages carefully and you will see again and again they were given to comfort believers, to confirm that God was still on the throne, and to verify that God knew exactly what would happen.

So, my question to you is: "Do you trust and believe in the confirmation that you belong to God?" "Do you dwell in the past or have you moved onto the promises of God that confirm He will take care of you?" Whether you have come from generations of prosperity or from abject poverty,

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you are a part of a creation that God on the sixth day declared “*was all good*” **Genesis 1:31**. Despite the disobedience of people including you and me, Jesus has promised that “*He will make all things new.*” **Revelation 21:5** In fact, if you have put your faith in Jesus Christ and accepted His salvation, you are already a new ‘creation’. Being saved in Jesus means you are, “*a new creature, the old things have passed away; behold, the new things have come.*” **II Corinthians 5:17**.

Knowing the beginning and the end of earthly civilization and knowing the beginning and the end of your becoming a new ‘creation’. You can claim the promises of God and confirm that they are all at work in your life.

Some of the greatest self-confirmations based on the promises of God are in the Scriptures. This one of David is a great example:

Psalm 139:14 “*I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; wonderful are your works, and my soul knows it very well.*”

Again, David writes in:

Psalm 36:4-7 “*I sought the Lord and He answered me; he delivered me from all my fears. Those who look to him are radiant, their faces are never covered with shame. This poor man called and the Lord heard him, he saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and He delivers them.*”

Paul did not write a single book of the New Testament that is not full of confirmations based on God’s promises. A familiar one is:

Phil. 1:12-13 “*I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through Him who gives me strength.*”

But I learned more about self-confirmation based on God’s promises. I want you to remember this next statement:

2. God will Forever Remind Us; We are His!

Peter is only a few paragraphs into his letter to the persecuted Gentile Christians when he reminds them that he will say over and over that they belong to God and ask them to confirm their calling and their being chosen by God to belong to God’s family. In fact, Peter says he will repeat that message until he dies. He is probably writing this letter from a Roman prison, Nero has started his persecution of Christians, and Peter will soon die; but Peter feels this message is so important that he will repeat it as long as he has breath. Peter is even writing this letter so that other Christians would have proof that what he said is true, even after he is removed from the earth. Sometimes we never hear it because we are so dependent on the confirmations of other people; but the truth that God confirms you through His promises and reminds you of how much He values you and what you mean to Him is there at all times. It is in good sermons, in good lessons, the Scriptures,

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the wise sayings of Godly people, and most of all it is there in the middle of your heart. It is a truth that you know that God has assured you of in your stronger spiritual moments. It is true and deep down in the inner recesses of our heart; we all know that it is the confirmation that really counts and really directs us in a Godly way.

At this point in my study of *II Peter*, the truth was intense and pointed. I could immediately see that God was pointing me in a different direction. I had been raised in a family where only the slightest acknowledgement was made of all accomplishments and I longed for confirmations from others. But God showed me clearly that I needed to get my confirmations from the same place I did when I was growing up. I needed to get them from Him and affirm to myself how special I was to God and how God would never remove a promise He made to His faithful believers. I have tried ever since that study as I minister to affirm what God has promised and asked people to confirm it in their life.

Finally, I want you to remember one more statement:

3. Jesus Has Given Irrefutable Proof in The Scripture That We Have the Protection of His Confirmation!

Peter says something so emphatically true that unless you just will not believe the Bible, it seals the deal. He says what he has told them is not some fable. In the time Peter wrote, it meant mythical stories about gods and miracles. Realizing that false leaders and their followers would try to discredit his letter, and that he has probably already being accused of concocting fables and myths in order to get people to follow him so he could amass wealth, power, and prestige as false teachers did. Peter gave evidence to prove that he wrote the truth of GOD. God had inspired Peter to write this letter to make known this truth of Jesus Christ; Jesus possessed all of the Majesty and Power of God Always, even when He was on the earth; He was still God.

God had revealed it to Peter, James and John on the Mount of Transfiguration and it was a preview of the Majesty that Jesus would display when He came to earth a second time. It was a time when Jesus took the three inner-circle disciples and they went to a Mountain where He was transfigured, shown in His glorified body, between Elijah and Moses. The glorified body of Jesus shown so brightly that the disciples were blinded and could not see again until the glorified body of Jesus returned to the physical body, they saw each day. They had seen the cloud of glory that circled the mountain and had heard the voice of God the Father say, *“This is my Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased.”*

Peter in essence is saying there was no reason to believe the false teachers who denied the ministry of Christ and denied that He was coming back to earth again. They had not been on the mountain. They did not see the transfiguration and glorification of Jesus. They only spoke from their warped point of view—an attempt to discredit Jesus as the Son of God. We need to also realize that all of those who tell us the way to mental and emotional health is to have others confirm us and say kind and confirming words about us; have not experienced the real power that comes from accepting the Promises of God and confirming those in your own life. God alone will protect you from the

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charlatans, the devious, the deceivers and others who prey on you with false confirmations to further their purposes.

When I was a boy, I really looked forward to a family meal and get-together at my Grandpa Van Middlesworth's home. They were a farm family that had three girls and all of the ladies: Grandma and the three girls were excellent cooks. We would get to play with our cousins, eat delicious food all day until we had to go home to do chores, and just have a fantastic time. My grandparents did not believe in TV, so we had to create our own entertainment. It was just a great day of fun. It was even more fun than Christmas.

Have you ever wondered what Jesus is looking forward to? When He was on the earth, He frequently spoke of future events and even His role in them. He never once said He could not wait to return to earth to eliminate Satan, win the battle of Armageddon and eliminate all the sinners of the earth. I have heard Christians all of my life say they can't wait for Jesus to do those things, but it is not recorded that Jesus was focused on those events.

What Jesus did tell us is that He has gone to prepare a place for His bride and just like a Jewish wedding at the time of Christ, He would build a home for His bride. Then He will sound the trumpet, just as the groom sounded the shofar and announced to all that He is coming to get His bride. He will carry her to heaven—His Church—and there will celebrate with her the Wedding Feast and then take His bride with Him to come to earth and win the battle of Armageddon. I would encourage us to see that Jesus was not limited in what He could do but He anticipated preparing a place for us; coming to get us; and celebrating with us in heaven forever. That is the Protection by Confirmation that I want you to claim. Jesus has done that for you and He wants you to confirm it in your life. Claim it and declare it done by the Lord. It is great protection for you and for all that you hope to accomplish.

Our Next Lesson is a very exciting lesson on ***II Peter 1:19-21***. The name of the study is "The Protection of Prophecy". Peter spells out the Biblical reason for prophecy, it is to keep us in Christ until Jesus comes again. By the way, Christianity is the only faith that has prophecy recorded in its holy writings. All Scriptural prophecy is from the Holy Spirit!

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LESSON #3: “The Protection of Prophecy” II Peter 2:1-10a

In this lesson we will learn what Peter tells us is the great power of prophecy. It is the protection shield for all believers.

II Peter 1:19-21

“We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns, and the morning star rises in your hearts. Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation of things. For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”

How often we hear the Scripture from **II Timothy 3:16-17** *“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”* My guess is many more times than you have heard the Scripture from II Peter that goes even one step further when speaking of the authenticity of Prophecy in the Bible; because Peter also says that prophecy was not even influenced by the human conditions that were present when he wrote. Listen to what he says, *“For prophecy never had its origin in the human will.”* Many parts of the bible were written to help the people of God deal with the circumstances, the persecution, and the evils of their day; but prophecy was always guided by the Holy Spirit for the foretelling of certain events and acts of God.

What does that mean to you and me? For one thing, we can never say about prophecy. ‘Well, that doesn’t pertain to me, I didn’t live in the Bible ages and I do not see how their customs and ways of doing things should guide what I do.’ No, the Bible tells us that God had the Scripture writers write verbatim what the Holy Spirit told them so that these prophecies would apply to every generation of all peoples until they were fulfilled. It also tells us that God has a plan for all that is to happen and we are never as alone as we think we are. God has prophetically told us that He always has the events of the world under His providence and He will guide all of creation to the place that it should be. One last thing this phrase tells us is the God who gave us hundreds of fulfilled prophecies is the same God who will fulfill all the prophecies that are not yet fulfilled.

It is very disturbing to me that many critics of the Bible including many who call themselves Christians, place prophecy in the same category as they place miracles. These events, miracles, predictions and prophecies, they say are just not true and you do not have to believe them. The astonishing thing to me is that it is not difficult to show that great collections of prophecies about certain major Bible events have all come true. You can look at the prophecies about the birth of Jesus Christ, the Messiah and Redeemer of mankind. God becoming flesh and see that well over a dozen were fulfilled at the time of the birth of Christ. That alone should seem like sure proof that what God says is still to come will come!

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Odds of the Prophecy Fulfillment of Christ Life

The last week of Christ's life contains well over 50 different prophecies that were fulfilled. I want us to put that in perspective. Now if you were establishing a percentage of possibility for a sporting event, you would take the things that have happened in the past, average those out and set the odds for your prediction. But let's go one step further, when you have multiple sporting predictions all happening at the same time the odds are much greater. For instance, let's say that the sports authorities have predicted that the Los Angeles Dodgers will be the National League representative in the World Series and set the odds at 5 to 1 that they will be involved; also they have said that their opponent would be the Tampa Bay Rays and the odds of the Rays being involved are 20 to 1, that would mean that the odds that the Dodgers and the Rays would meet in the World Series would be 200 to 1. Can you imagine what the odds would be when you combine 50 + prophecies into one week and calculate the odds for all of those events happening?

Critics of Bible Prophecy

Why is prophecy such a protector and guard for Christians? Let's take a look at what the critics of Bible prophecy say and what Peter establishes.

Many people today reject Bible prophecy as irrelevant for our time because they say, it lacks logic and accuracy. They consider Bible prophecy a tool of religious fanatics or the obsession of those spiritually imbalanced. Peter shatters that false opinion of Bible prophecy by saying in **II Peter 1:19**, *"we also have the prophetic word made more sure, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts."*

Let's look at this statement by Peter, *"we have the prophetic word made more sure,"* Peter testifies that he and the other apostles were eyewitnesses of the life, miracles, death, resurrection and ascension back into heaven of Jesus Christ. In a court of law, an eyewitness account is considered the absolute standard of truth and accuracy. The same logic can be used for discovering truth in Scripture.

Peter makes four points in this verse that we dare not miss.

1. He says Bible prophecy is more accurate than an eyewitness account. Its truth is absolute.
2. He says to the church, 'you do well to pay attention.' The arrogant attitude in the church toward prophecy is clearly unscriptural. There is a difference between interpreting Scripture and ignoring Scripture. Why should a person study prophecy? Bible prophecy proves the divine inspiration of the Word of God. The Bible is different from all other religious books. The books that are the foundation for major religions and cults interpret the present or deal with the past. None attempt to interpret the future. The Bible, when written, was 25 percent prophecy. From Genesis to Revelation, countless prophecies were given, and most have been exactly fulfilled. This confirms the inspiration, validity, and authority of the Bible. Consider the prophecies concerning the birth of Jesus Christ. Hundreds of years before He was born, the Old Testament told us:

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- a. The time of His birth in ***Daniel 9***;
 - b. The fact of His virgin birth in ***Isaiah 7***;
 - c. The place of His birth in ***Micah 5***;
 - d. The intimate details of His life and death in ***Psalms 22*** and ***Isaiah 53***
 - e. The fact of His resurrection in ***Psalms 16***.
3. He speaks of “*a light that shines in a dark place*”. The darkness here is spiritual darkness, which certainly describes our world. Peter says that Bible prophecy is a divine light guiding us through the spiritual darkness of each generation.
 4. He states that Bible prophecy will be of benefit to the church, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. The dawning of the new day is the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. The “morning star” is none other than Jesus Christ Himself.

Peter in this verse boldly declares that Bible prophecy will be of benefit to the church until the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and the end of the age. It was what God designed Bible Prophecy to be. The light that directs and protects all committed believers to stay loyal and faithful until Jesus comes to get them.

Another reason some reject Bible Prophecy is because it does not fit the way they think a “faithful and on-top-of-it God should get things done. Prophecy spreads itself out over hundreds of years and sometimes even thousands of years and does not deal with each injustice in this life. It is amazing how impatient many Christians are. God is so patient with us, He saves us, He cleans us up, and leads us to do good works for Him and yet He never spends a great amount of time chastising us for not getting it done more quickly. Many Christians on the other hand, criticize God frequently and loudly for not protecting every innocent person, for not righting every wrong in this life, and for not destroying every oppressive and warmongering nation. I was at a memorial service for a man who walked in our neighborhood every day for many years and my neighbor walked over to me after the service and said, “You’re a God-man, would you tell me why God is not just killing Putin and eliminating the Russian army? That is the right thing for God to do!” So, I discussed with him several things that allowed this to work for me and my belief in God:

1. God does not settle all scores in this life
2. God works at a pace we cannot always see
3. God directs nations to accomplish the deeds He said they would do.
4. God does this without ever losing a single person from going to heaven who has saving faith in Him
5. God also has a slow but thorough means of separating the good from the bad.

“Well, the guy said to me, we can’t all just wait for Armageddon for God to do something!” I had heard it before but not quite that abrupt and in your face. He was saying that fulfilling Bible Prophecy was

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too long and too slow and it did not allow God to do all the things quickly enough that needed done right now.

God's Patience is Extraordinary

God's patience is extraordinary and unbelievable. Peter will tell us later in his Epistle, *"The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. Instead, He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."* **II Peter 3:9**

I heard a story about a salesman who lived about 100 years ago and who was making his first visit to the far backwoods of his western territory. By this point in his sales travels, he was riding a train drawn by an antique engine. It stopped at every little town and never got any speed. Finally, it stopped in the middle of nowhere. By now the salesman was the only passenger. The conductor assured the salesman, "Nothing to worry about sir. Just a cow on the track." Sure enough, after a minute or two the train lurched forward, but after chugging along for a mile or two, it again slowed and stopped. "Just a temporary delay" the conductor said, "We'll be on our way shortly." "What now? the exasperated salesman asked. "Did we catch up to the cow once again?"

Like that salesman, most people are not at all patient, and that makes it hard to them to understand God. It is especially true in the protection that comes from prophecy. God is not only patient, He is longsuffering. People who misunderstand the longsuffering patience of God tend to make two mistakes about God; some conclude that He is uncaring about what happens to people in this life and others believe that He is arrogant, vindictive and takes His anger out on people. Neither of these conclusions is anywhere near the truth. God is pained by the wickedness of people's thoughts and actions. That includes our thoughts and actions. He is deeply concerned about the cruelty of war and the oppression of the weak by the strong. God's response to human sin has always been to provide a solution and then, with patient, longsuffering call people back to Him. Only after people reject God's grace and mercy over long periods of time do they ever find themselves facing His reluctant wrath.

In the Old Testament, the nations destroyed in battles had been decadent nations for centuries, **Genesis 15, 16**. Israel and Judah went into exile only after laughing at God's prophets and killing them because they did not like their message. This happened generation after generation, as **Isaiah 65** and **Hosea 11** tell us. God wasn't looking for people to bully, He waited until no new person could be saved before He ever acted. Only then were most of the people suddenly aware that they needed the protection of God. But they did not change until they realized that they were lost. That often happens, when we no longer have any normal support system keeping us afloat, we are more willing to listen to what God is saying. That is why Peter tell us the protection of God through prophecy is so important. God is not indifferent to evil in the world. He cares about ethnic violence, political repression, religious persecution, abuse of children and all kinds of exploitation. He suffers with His creation and all the people in it. No one gets away with anything in terms of eternity, but everyone has many chances to respond to God's grace, **I Tim. 2:3,4**; and **I Peter 3:9**.

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Don't misinterpret God's patience. He may not intervene immediately to punish every oppressor and to rescue everyone who suffers, but He does care. He has set a plan and if we follow that prophetic plan and trust in it and not our understanding then we will see that God truly hates the sin and loves the sinner; suffers with the oppressed; and is neither a bully or wimp; but will bring all things to the right conclusion when He is totally in charge of our care and evil along with sin are eliminated from our lives.

Bible Prophecy Provides Overwhelming Proof God is in Control

Grant Jeffery in his book, 'The Signature of God' tells us that the study of the fulfillment of biblical prophecy provides overwhelming proof that God is controlling human history. The hand of God is moving behind the scenes to bring about His will over earth, **Isaiah 42:9**.

I want to summarize some of the prophecies that he highlights in his book. The history of Israel, God's chosen people, was precisely prophesied throughout the Bible, down to the most detailed developments. Each of the three long captivities of Israel was foretold. The first exile in Egypt, lasted 430 years; the second was the 70 years of captivity in Babylon; and the final exile, a worldwide dispersion of the Jews that lasted for 2,000 years. Every time Israel was outside the Promised Land, the duration of the captivity was foretold. The date of the rebirth of Israel on May 15, 1948 was foretold by the prophet Ezekiel more than 25 centuries before it occurred and long before the Israelites were dispersed out of Israel. **Ezekiel 4:3-6** It is a prophecy where each day represents one biblical year. A year in the Bible was always 360 days because it was based on a lunar calendar and a year was 12 months of 30 days each. If we calculate the time that Ezekiel said the nation would be in dispersion and use the Jewish formula for years and go right from 1 BC to 1 AD, no year 0, we find that he said it would be 2,483.8 calendar years and when you translate that into our present time keeping it would be 1948.4 AD. On the afternoon of May 14, 1948, the Jews proclaimed the independence of the reborn State of Israel.

Let's look at the second captivity, the 70 years in Babylon. Jeremiah had prophesied that the duration of the captivity of the Jewish exiles in Babylon would be exactly 70 years, **Jeremiah 25:11**. They were conquered in 606 BC and released in 536 BC—exactly 70 years.

A look at the first time of captivity, 400 years in Egypt is also prophesied and spelled out in the Bible. On the 14th day of Nisan, the exact date that would become the day of Passover, the Lord appeared to Abraham to proclaim the covenant for the Promised Land. God also prophesied that Abraham's descendants would be in affliction and bondage for a period of 400 years. "And God said unto Abram, know for certain that your seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them 400 years. **Genesis 15:13**. It was fulfilled in **Exodus 12:41** where "the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt." Paul confirmed that God fulfilled His promise to end the captivity precisely 430 years after the promise was given to Abraham in **Galatians 3:17**.

But it is the elaborate prophecies about the Messiah, Jesus Christ that should lead us to see the protection of prophecy is for us as well. The Old Testament contains more than 300 passages that

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refer to the first coming of the promised Messiah. They are remarkably detailed, and taken together they present a clear portrait of God's Messiah. Within the prophecies, Bible scholars have found 48 specific details that match the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. I will close out this study with seven of these. They will present undeniable evidence that only one person, Jesus of Nazareth, could be Israel's promised Messiah. All of these are easily checked and verified and the fact that 48 detailed prophecies are given eliminates the idea that random chance was a factor in what happened in the life of Jesus Christ.

1. The Messiah would be born in the town of Bethlehem, and his ancestry would be from the tribe of Judah. It is in ***Micah 5:2*** and is fulfilled in ***Matthew 2:1***. (Odds 1 in 2,400)
2. The Messiah would be preceded by a messenger. It was prophesied in ***Isaiah 40:3*** and fulfilled in ***Matthew 3:1-2*** when John the Baptist was named as that messenger. (Odds 1 in 20 or combined for the two the odds are 1 in 4,800)
3. The Messiah would enter Jerusalem on a donkey colt. It was prophesied in ***Zechariah 9:9*** and fulfilled in ***Luke 19:35-37***. (Odds are 1 in 50 and the combined odds of the three are 1 in 2.4 million) We are already at astronomical odds and this is only three.
4. He would be betrayed by a friend. It was prophesied in ***Psalms 41:9*** and fulfilled in ***Matthew 26:47-48***. (Odds 1 in 10 or combined for the four 1 in 24 million)
5. His hands and feet would be pierced. It was prophesied in ***Psalms 22:16*** and fulfilled in ***Luke 23:33***. (Odds are 1 in 100 or combined for the five are 1 in 2.4 billion)
6. The Messiah would be wounded by His enemies. It was prophesied in ***Isaiah 53:5*** and fulfilled in ***Matthew 27:26***. (Odds are 1 in 10 or the combined odds are 1 in 24 billion)
7. He would be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver. It was prophesied in ***Zechariah 11:12*** and fulfilled in ***Matthew 26:15***. (Odds are 1 in 50 or the combined for the seven are 1 in 1.2 trillion)

I want you to realize that this is only 7 of the very clear 48 specific details that would be in the life of Jesus Christ. It is such an astounding number for the probability of all 48 happening that it would be meaningless to just list all the zeroes it would take to represent it. But of the 17 that Dr. Jeffry lists in his book, he estimates that the possibility that the Messiah could have been anyone else than Jesus Christ of Nazareth would be 1 chance in 4.8 trillion X 1 billion X 1 trillion. If God used prophecy to tell us that much about Jesus so the world would believe who He was, He will also use prophecy to guide and protect us until He comes again. As Peter says, *"It is a light shining in the dark place until the day dawns and the Morning Star rises in your hearts."* Prophecy was given for us to find protection.

In the Next Lesson we will study how God "Protects Us from False Teachers," ***II Peter 2:1-10a***.

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LESSON #4: “Protection, God Handles False Teachers” II Peter 2:1-10b

There is nothing that hurts the work of the Lord more than false teachers. They can be the scourge of every Bible-Believing Church, they can harm many and afflict future generations in ways that boggle the mind; and most of all, they can lead people onto paths that seem to be very destructive.

I want us to listen carefully to what Peter tells us in our passage tonight. It is something that we do not always think about when we are under the stress of a battle with a false teacher; but it is so true. God is so upset and incensed over false teachers and the power that they can exert over believers that He has and will intervene and destroy them.

We face a very sinister dichotomy in our day. We have many who lead a crusade to change the writings of the Bible so that the teachings match what they believe. They are within and outside the Church as a whole. This is the classic behavior of a false teacher. They desire the Bible to approve: same-sex marriage and many levels of sexual behavior that do not mirror the Bible’s teaching of sex within the marriage relationship of a man and a woman as the intention of God. They argue over what is a man or what is a woman, encourage people to self-identify whether they are a man or a woman; have people choose their own pronouns to describe themselves; and tell people that your biological birth as a male or female baby has nothing to do with the sex you really are. They not only condemn the teachings of the Bible, they also try to have them ignored, replaced or even declared illegal. They also leave out miracles—call them myths; leave out prophecies; call them self-aggrandizements; and leave out conversions calling them manipulations. I want us to compare side by side, what has been fulfilled in the teachings of the bible in our generation and what has been accomplished by these who would revise and rewrite the Bible.

Bible Prophecies Fulfilled in Our Generation

What has happened the last 80 years that allows us to believe that the teachings of the Bible are accurate, real and more powerful than the attacks against the Bible?

These will be unique events that were never fulfilled in any past generation and due to their unique nature, could not be fulfilled again in another generation. These have happened in our lifetime. It was Jesus who said, “*And when these things begin to take place, stand up, and lift up your heads; you know that the Kingdom of God is near.*” **Luke 21:28**. The words of Jesus will never fail and a study of the events of the mid-twentieth century and the start of the 21st century will show that events prophesied as long as 3,000 years ago have come to pass in our generation.

1. The Rebirth of Israel.

We saw in **II Peter 1: 19-21**, that Ezekiel had prophesied that this would happen in **Ezekiel 4:3-6**. But Jesus also said it would happen in:

Matthew 24:32-35, “*Now learn this lesson from the fig tree. As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. Even so, when you see all these things, you know that it is near, right at the door. Truly I tell you, this generation will*

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certainly not pass away until these things have happened. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.”

The fig tree was a stand-alone symbol of Israel and there are 5 prophecies and teachings in the Bible to show that it was often the exclusive description of Israel: **Judges 9:8-15**; **Jeremiah 24:1-10**; **Hosea 9:10**; **Matthew 21:18-20**; and here in **Matthew 24:32-35**.

We know that the Roman army destroyed Jerusalem in AD 70 and the nation of Israel was disbursed in 125 AD and the land was renamed by the Romans as ‘Palestina’. In May of 1948 this prophecy was fulfilled and Israel again became a world nation by order of the United Nations. It happened in “one day” as **Isaiah 66:8** prophesied and became the first ancient nation to disappear and then reappear in modern times, 190 centuries later on the center stage of world history.

2. The War Between the Arabs and Israelis.

Three thousand years ago, God inspired David to predict that the reborn nation of Israel would be immediately surrounded by enemies, including the Arab nations of Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Syria.

Psalm 83:2-8

“See how your enemies growl, how your foes rear their heads. With cunning they conspire against your people; they plot against those you cherish. Come, they say, let us destroy them as a nation, so that Israel’s name is remembered no more. With one mind they plot together, they form an alliance against you, the tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites of Moab and the Hagrites, Byblos, Ammon and Amalek, Philistia, with the people of Tyre. Even Assyria has joined them to reinforce Lot’s descendants.”

This is a battle that could not have happened until Israel was restored in 1948 and it did happen three times and will happen a fourth time and David has used the ancient names of the modern states of the Middle East that joined with the Palestinians in their attempt to destroy the new Jewish nation.

3. The Miraculous Restoration of the Hebrew Language.

Zephaniah had predicted something just as improbable; some would say impossible as the rebirth of Israel. **Zephaniah 3:9**, said that the ancient dead language of Hebrew would be restored as the language of the nation of Israel.

Zephaniah 3:9

“For then, will I turn to the people a pure language that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve Him with one consent.”

The irony of this prophecy is that Hebrew had long ceased to be the language of the land of Israel even before the birth and life of Jesus Christ and served only as a religious language for the priesthood and services. The 7,000 words used by the priests were the base and Eliezer ben Yehuda added thousands of new Hebrew words to represent the things that were not known in ancient Israel and created a 14-volume dictionary for the new living

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language of Hebrew. As soon as immigrants came to Israel, they were taught Hebrew and when Israel was reestablished as a nation in 1948, they adopted Hebrew as their official language.

These first three were all prophesied over 2500 years before they came to pass and point out that Scripture is not only God breathed but Scripture is how God intends for His people to know what is to happen and what they are to do. The list becomes quite long when you look at all the things prophesied in the Bible that have been fulfilled in this generation:

4. The Return of the Ethiopian Jews to Israel

Zephaniah 3:10

“From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia my worshippers, my scattered people will bring me offerings.”

Isaiah had said that God would return His people from the North and from the South, **Isaiah 43:6**, and from 1987-1991 over 50,000 Jews came from the Ukraine-at that time a part of Russia and over 25,000 Jews came from Ethiopia.

5. The Fertility of the Land of Israel

Isaiah 27:6,

“In days to come Jacob (Israel) will take root Israel will bud and blossom and fill all the world with fruit.”

This could only happen with the rebirth of Israel, when the land was controlled by the Palestinians it was a barren land of Bedouin’s, grazing animals, and no orchards. The orchards and the cultivation of the land only occurred after it was the nation of Israel.

6. Plans to Rebuild the Temple

Isaiah 2:2

“In the last days the mountain of the Lord’s temple will be established as the highest of the mountains; it will be exalted above the hills and all nations will stream to it.”

Elaborate plans for restoration have been drawn up, the instruments needed to furnish the Temple have been constructed, the Sanhedrin has been restored, and all is in place to build the temple.

7. The Oil of Anointing Is Quite an Interesting Prophecy

The Bible says in **Exodus 30:25-26** that it must be what anoints the temple and it will be also used to anoint the Messiah when He returns, **Daniel 9:24**. It was known that it was made of 5 ingredients but the one special ingredient, afars’mon (believed to be an ancient persimmon plant) was required. When the Romans destroyed the temple in AD 70, they burnt the only two groves of afars’mon trees known. Incredibly, archaeologists led by Dr. Joseph Patrich of Hebrew University found a clay flask buried in a cave near the Dead Sea caves. The flask was filled with the ancient oil of anointing and was discovered after archaeologists followed directions listed in the Copper Scroll. It had been hidden by Jewish

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priests in the first century AD, and scientists from Hebrew University confirmed with carbon-14 dating that the oil discovered near the Dead Sea was 2,000 years old and is composed of the five ingredients described in **Exodus 30:25-26**. It is in the possession of the two chief rabbis of Israel and will be available when needed.

8. The Revival of the Roman Empire

Daniel 2:40-44, Daniel 7, Revelation 13, and Revelation 17 all confirm that a 10-nation superstate would be formed. Following the devastation of two world wars, the leadership of Europe came together to create a confederate form of a superstate to bring the major nations of Europe together. Europe had not been united in such a way since the days of ancient Rome. In 1957, six countries signed the Treaty of Rome, which laid the foundation for the future United States of Europe. Henri Spaak, the former secretary general of NATO, admitted in a BBC documentary that “we felt like Romans on that day . . . We were consciously recreating the Roman Empire once more. The European Union is an economic, political, and potentially, a military colossus that will dominate world events in the near future.”

9. The Rebuilding of Babylon, Isaiah 13:6. The city would be rebuilt again and destroyed by God on the Day of the Lord.

10. Deadly Pestilence, Zechariah 14:12, Rev. 6:8

11. World-Wide Famine, Revelation 6:5

12. Worldwide Mass Communications, Rev. 11:3-12

13. Dramatic increase in knowledge and travel, Daniel 12:4

14. Strategic Military Developments, Revelation 16:12

- a. The Euphrates River can now be dried up since the government of Turkey constructed the Ataturk Dam.
- b. “The way of the kings of the east might be prepared.” **Revelation 16:2.** The Chinese government has spent enormous sums to build a superhighway across Asia. They worked with Pakistani labors to build the highway through the Karakorum Mountains, the route parallels the ancient Silk Road followed by Marco Polo. This highway has no economic purpose, no foreigners are allowed to travel it and it has been completed through the south of China, Tibet, and Pakistan. This curious prophecy about the “way of the kings of the east” is being fulfilled, setting the stage for the final battle of this age.

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What Has Been Accomplished by These Who Would Revise / Rewrite the Bible?

What have false teachers done for our generation and this age that would make us want to follow them. They have attempted to rewrite the Scriptures to include only their areas of their focus and it always has come at the cost of the total Divinity of Christ and the Providential control of God. They have often ignored or rewritten parts of the Bible that do not match their concepts. They exalt psychology and philosophy over the Bible and judge the Bible by their psychological and philosophical thoughts. They mirror the false teachers of other generations because they still have motives that are impure and devious.

Peter tells us that just as there were false prophets that God had to eliminate from the land, so the church will always be plagued by false teachers until Christ comes again. It will always be an attack against Jesus Christ and a denial of the power and adequacy of Christ to handle all of our needs.

They will attract many followers, primarily because they will teach and recruit followers based on the popular thoughts of the day. They will be motivated by greed—greed of money, greed of sexual conquests, greed of power, and greed of fame. They will try hard to convince people to follow them by using persuasive psychological ideas that contradict the Bible but mirror the popular thought of the day.

Peter then tells us how God will protect His people and in **II Peter 2:4-10**, he traces what God has done in the past to eliminate false teachers and to hold out the reality that God is still in the business of eliminating false teachers. They are just not people who God will tolerate confusing and mistreating His people.

First, Peter begins the list, not in the Garden of Eden when Satan first deceived mankind, but in the ranks of the angels, where the first false teaching was conducted by Satan, who as Lucifer tried to lure all the other angels into following him and rebelling against the leadership of God. But it was the act of inhabiting men to be promiscuous with women and produce unusual offspring, **Genesis 6** where God drew a line and sent them all to the deep recesses of Hades. They stayed there because of their great sin of **Genesis 6** and are being held there bound in darkness and awaiting final judgment.

Second, Peter reminds them that world was full of false teachers in the day of Noah and when God saw that none of them would still repent, He destroyed them with a world-wide flood and preserved 8 righteous people to repopulate the earth. Noah was the faithful teacher and the rest of the world were the false teachers.

Third, Peter reminded them that when the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah had become so corrupt by rampant homosexuality that God brought divine judgment on the cities and all were incinerated, **Jude 7**. It was clear that God drew a line with this unmistakable message of what was too much for Him to allow to continue.

It is interesting to note that God saved the righteous in each of the stories and allowed them to continue and prosper here upon the earth. Although Lot had his own shortcomings, he did suffer in the environment where he lived because of the overt and outrageous behavior of the townspeople.

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Our being the true teachers of God’s Word and not the false teachers should never cause us to reach a point where we accept that which is false and evil but are always offended and repulsed at what God said is wrong, unnatural, and not of His design.

Power of Protection by God

Peter tells the readers strongly of the Power of Protection by God for His people when it comes to false teachers. In verses 9 and 10, Peter spells out how God does it and how that should calm the fears of all believers. Let’s examine those verses in detail:

II Peter 2:9 says: *“If this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to hold the unrighteous for punishment on the day of judgment,”*

The word trials or temptations in this verse means, “an attack with intent to destroy.” And refers to severe punishment that God will take against false teachers. The clear meaning of Peter is that God will plan to rescue the godly before His judgment falls on the wicked. God knows how to rescue the godly from the false teachers. The false teachers on the other hand will be kept by the Lord until the time when all who did not believe in Jesus Christ will stand before the Great White Throne of judgment and hear the deserved sentence from God.

The first part of **II Peter 10** that spells out the final results as God protects His people from false teacher.

II Peter 10a *“This is especially true of those who follow the corrupt desire of the flesh and despise authority.”*

A common trait in all false teachers, whether the day of Noah, or Lot, or Peter, or even today is they are slaves to the corrupt desires of the flesh. They despise authority, especially the authority of a higher being and do not really accept Jesus or God as their Lord. They identify with Christ outwardly, but will not live under His leadership. The two major characteristics of false teachers are mentioned here. They are lustful and they are arrogant. The first is easy to identify and they manipulate people to gain a sexual advantage over them. They also are arrogant: presumptuous and self-willed. They are brazened, audacious, and defiant. They also are often obstinate and intend to have their own way in everything.

I have had the bad experience of having two false teachers infiltrate the Churches that I have served and take a small group out of the Church. Each was involved in wrongful sexual encounters with people that went with them and both quickly were ostracized out of any Church and abandoned by their families. It may seem painful at the time but it is true that God will protect His faithful people from false teachers. Those who respond to the false teachers often had a fault in their total obedience to Jesus Christ and when corrected, they all returned to worship God in a faithful Church. Those who would attack the Bible in our generation and declare it not the book we are to follow must still deal with all the prophecies that have come true in this generation and also look at the fruits of what they have produced. To spend a lifetime trying to convince people to not believe the Bible and substitute new thoughts for the clear teaching of the Scripture, means you will be removed by God, bound in darkness and reserved for just judgment by God.

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The next lesson, Peter teaches us that God “Protects in Every Way, Without Limits.” False teachers have no limits and no restraints. They will criticize and belittle even angels and celestial beings. They only desire to feed their own appetites. They say what people want to hear and God will protect His people from such deceivers. We can live without worry under the protection of God. His protection is complete.

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LESSON #5 “God Protects Every Way, Without Limits” II Peter 2:10b-16

In this Lesson, Peter addresses a problem that plagued the Church in the first century and really plagues the Church today; false teachers and the destruction they leave in the land.

False teachers have one common goal in life and that is the self-glorification and self-exaltation of themselves. They intend to take everything they can from their world and really have no conscience about how it is done and no qualms about who they destroy. God will not tolerate false teachers and has always intervened to destroy them and to rescue the righteous that they are afflicting. Having told the readers of three major times God intervened to destroy false teachers and rescue the righteous:

1. When angels inhabited the bodies of men and produced a hybrid race.
2. When the people of Noah’s time lived with no restraints and morals.
3. When the townspeople of Sodom and Gomorrah were so enticed with homosexuality that they saw every person of the same sex as a new conquest.

God rescued; first the world from the behavior of such lustful angels and sent the angels into a prison in the abode of the dead; then Noah and the seven righteous people with him, and finally Lot and his daughters from their evil cities.

God Still Protects His People Today

Now Peter tells us God has not stopped His battle against false teachers. God still protects His people today from the false teachers and false philosophies of our day. In the first verse of our study, **II Peter 2:10b**, Peter says false teachers see nothing wrong with condemning and speaking evil against the spiritual creatures of God. They speak evil of the angels that God created. Interesting that even good angels do not speak evil of wicked angels, but respect the fact that since they transcend time, they are not born and do not die, they are to be viewed in a respectful way. The Devil should be viewed as powerful and transcendent and the defeat of the Devil and his imps will be something that Jesus does for us and not something that we can do on our own.

I feel these false teachers heaped abuse on the angels of the day of **Genesis 6** when ‘all the angels did not keep their proper domain.’ In an attempt to make themselves look better, they heaped abuse and ridicule on the angels who stepped out of line in previous generations to show that what they were doing was not anything wrong like these wicked angels did.

Why would that be false teaching and why would God want Peter to warn his people that they need protected from it? Because the Bible says there is a spiritual war that is raging all around us all the time. It is fought in the heavens and in the world and we humans cannot see it. When a believer develops a flippant attitude toward this destructive spirit world, they are easy pickings for the Devil and his crew. Callously, they accept magic, Ouija boards, occult practices, conjuring of the dead, false predictions and a host of other areas which invite the spirit world to enter their world and cause havoc. So, God tells us to simply stay out of this cosmic fight and leave it to Him and His angels.

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Familiarity with evil is not something that is good for us. It is hard to know when the line will be crossed that allows something that is familiar to become something in your life. False teachers minimize the evil celestial beings and make Christians more susceptible to their traps. False teachers take it one step further and lead people into disastrous results.

II Peter 2:11-12 spells this out,

“yet, even angels, although they are stronger and more powerful, do not heap abuse on such beings when bringing judgment on them from the Lord. But these people blaspheme in matters they do not understand. They are like unreasoning animals, creatures of instinct, born only to be caught and destroyed, and like animals they too will perish.”

False Teachers Display an Arrogance Toward Authority

False teachers display and teach an arrogance toward authority that leads to their being devoured by their world. When the authority is good helpful authority, their arrogance leads to anarchy, disobedience, disruption, and law-breaking. It is society in total chaos. Even when the authority is not good, like this instance speaking of evil angels and the devil the result is being devoured by the world.

Holy angels are more powerful than us humans and they are not defiant toward other angels; even evil ones and they will not speak insults against any authority. Even the archangel, Michael, recognized the great presence and power of Satan, and refused to speak evil of him in **Jude 8, 9**.

The passage in Jude is the clearest passage in the Bible of how Christians are to deal with Satan and his imps (angels). It starts, “. . . they reject authority and heap abuse on celestial beings. But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not himself dare to condemn him for slander but said, ‘The Lord rebuke you!’ “ This is the only mention of the struggle between the Devil and Michael over the body of Moses. Moses had climbed Mount Nebo by Himself at the Lord’s command and the mountain overlooked the promised land. Moses died on top of the mountain without ever entering into the land. He was secretly buried by Michael in a place not known to man, **Deuteronomy 34:5-6**. It is likely that this confrontation took place as Michael buried Moses to prevent Satan from using Moses’ body for some distorted purpose. Perhaps Satan wanted to use it as an idol, an object of worship for Israel. But God sent Michael to be certain it was buried. This account was recorded in the book, The Assumption of Moses, a Holy Spirit guided reference to a book of Jewish history not considered a part of the inspired Old Testament.

Rather than personally cursing such a powerful angel as Satan, Michael deferred to the ultimate, sovereign power of God following the example of the Angel of the Lord in **Zechariah 3:2**. This is the best illustration of how Christians are to deal with Satan and demons. Believers are not to address them, but rather seek the Lord’s intervening power to defeat them.

False Teachers are Like Wild Animals That Act on Instinct

Peter then compares false teachers to wild animals that act on instinct and not on intelligence. They have no sensitivity or knowledge of the power of the demonic world so they charge into this

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supernatural realm and like real wild animals they attack everything. The false teachers cast curses and vindictive statements toward the demonic world, a world which they do not really understand. Since they live and act like wild beasts, they will meet an end like wild beasts. Their arrogance and dependence upon their instincts and feelings will cause them to be killed. False teachers can never get beyond their own instincts and their driving passions unless changed and given to Jesus, and this unwillingness to change will lead false teachers to their demise.

Peter explains how false teachers have chosen a life like the wild animals in **II Peter 2:13**, *“They will be paid back with harm for the harm they have done. Their idea of pleasure is to carouse in broad daylight. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their pleasures while they feast with you.”* The false teachers of any age are marked by two characteristics: immorality and arrogant boldness and it only robs and never brings a blessing to anyone. They have cast off all limits and see the daytime as a time for their carousing. During the time Peter wrote this letter, the idea of sinning in broad daylight and not under the cover of darkness, **I Thessalonians 5:7**, was considered the lowest of low-life living in Roman society. But these false teachers were so consumed by lust and rebellion that they refused to wait until night but publicly during the day lived out their immorality. These out-of-control passions consumed them just as a refusal to stop alcohol consumption will consume the alcoholic or continuing to feed a drug addiction only consumes the addict. Peter uses two words in the Greek language to describe them; they are dirt spots and scabs on the face of society. They are what make a civilization look awful. They were essentially dirt spots, or we might say, dirt bags at the love feasts at the Christian worship services they attended. The first Church made a meal out of the communion service as they observed a weekly communion time and modelled it after the last supper of Jesus. These false teachers were so arrogant that they behaved immorally and arrogantly at these meals, probably gluttons over-eating all the delicious parts of the pot luck meals and making lewd and immoral advances and actions towards the people of the congregation. Although they covered their pathetic behavior with religious talk—they were like filthy eyesores at these church gatherings. They were ruining the reputation of the church in the community and feeding fuel to the critics that the church was a loosely run immoral body of people.

They had a wild animal attitude toward sex as Peter explains in **II Peter 2:14**, *“With eyes full of adultery, they never stop sinning; they seduce the unstable, they are experts in greed—an accursed brood!”* These false teachers were so totally led by immorality that they could not look at a woman without seeing her as a potential adulteress, **Matthew 5:28** and perhaps also saw each man as a potential sexual partner, **Rom. 1:27**. They awoke each morning to begin their sexual conquests of the day and did not stop being driven by lust until they fell asleep at night.

The word seduce here speaks of the bait used to lure a fish to be caught. False teachers do not capture the strong of the world, but they prey on the weak, the unstable, those young in the faith, and often those without strong self-esteem. **Ephesians 4:14**; and **I John 2:13** They train themselves to prepare and equip their minds to focus only on the things that were perverse and immoral. They only learned Scripture to use as a tool to promote their immorality. Their end goal for each day was self-fulfillment.

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They are like the “Children of the Damned”, destined for a life away from God because sins connected with greed and sexuality had become their only way of life.

False Teachers Forsake Being Obedient to God

Peter closes this part of his warning about false teachers with one other illustration from the Old Testament:

II Peter 2:15-16

“They have left the straight way and wandered off to follow the way of Balaam son of Bezer, who loved the wages of wickedness. But he was rebuked for his wrongdoing by a donkey, an animal without speech, who spoke with a human voice and restrained the prophet’s madness.”

The people Peter spoke about were false teachers and they had forsaken the right way of God and turned to false ways to delude God’s people. The right way is another way of saying, a metaphor, for “Being obedient to God”. We see that described when Paul had landed on the Island of Cyprus on his first missionary journey and Paul was confronted by a false teacher, Elymas, who tried to have Paul arrested and stopped when he and Barnabas were invited to speak to the proconsul, who happened to be Elymas’s boss and the one in charge of running the Island. When Elymas was finished with his false charges to the proconsul Paul turned to him and said:

Acts 13:10-11

“You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right!! You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord? Now the hand of the Lord is against you. You are going to be blind for a time, not even able to see the light of the sun.”

Balaam was an Old Testament prophet who heard from the Lord and was able to prophesy correctly. However, he soon discovered that the only way to make much money in the “Prophecy Business” was to offer his prophecies for sale to the highest bidder. The story is found in **Numbers 22** but several references to him are throughout the Bible.

Jude 11

“Woe to them, they have taken the way of Cain; they have rushed for profit into Balaam’s error; they have been destroyed in Korah’s rebellion.”

Jude compares false teachers to the first killer of a human, Cain killing his brother Able; to Balaam selling his gift of prophecy and to Korah rebelling against the spiritual leadership of Aaron in the wilderness. Here Peter focuses on Balaam who preferred wealth and popularity over faithfulness and obedience to God. Then Peter tells how God stopped that false teacher in his tracks, he turned his donkey into a speaking donkey who chastised his master and made him turn back around and not sell his prophecy to the enemies. God will go to extreme measures to protect His people from false prophets.

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God Protects Us from All False Teachers

False teachers have no limits, but God will limit them, and if we allow, God will protect us from all false teachers. False teachers have no restraints but God will restrain them, bind them, and eliminate them in His great desire to make sure that His children are protected from false teachers.

You might ask why that is so important. I want to use a lesson from history to illustrate the point. Actually, I could use our own nation, the USA to illustrate the point. We took the Bible, prayer, Scripture reading, Baccalaureates, athletic prayer times before and after games, the Ten Commandments being posted in a public school and many other steps that seemed like overt Christianity were gone out of the schools, and then bemoan what has happened to our schools. False teachers have led us a long way down a slippery slope of secularism that cannot have a good ending.

We took the concept of creation out of the studies of the formation of the earth, the making of life, the guidance of our world, and the final answer to a creator for what mankind does to this creation. None have been worse than to teach our children that evolution is a clear proof that we are the highest of the animal kingdom and our advances have been because of evolutionary progress and not that a Divine Being has made people and given them the gifts and abilities that they have. Our world has brought the idea that mankind is the highest of the animals and often live like animals. We have taught them the principles of evolution and not the principles of Divine Creation and they are very skilled at using those evolutionary principles to get what they want. It is often devoid of morality. What kind of morality is in the base-line thought of evolution that “only the strongest survive?”

That is only a tip of the iceberg and I will return to this thought in one of our future lessons on **II Peter**. I want to take the main thoughts of an essay that Dr. Grant Jeffery wrote on “The Bible’s Transformation of Society.” It is one more reason for us to praise God for His protection against false teachers and cements the need for us to stay grounded in Christ and ignore the false teachers.

He takes the dramatic example of the social situation in England right before the evangelical revival led by John and Charles Wesley, that rescued England from moral abyss. The situation that England faced in the early 1700’s was virtually the same as the current moral collapse we see in North America. Let me quote what one of the English writers said of the day, “To a degree that has never been known in any Christian country. . .Our prospect is very terrible and the symptoms grow worse from day to day. There is a torrent of evil in the land which threatens a general inundation and destruction of these areas. The youth born and brought up in wicked times without any bias to good from early principle, or instilled opinion, when they grow ripe, must be monsters indeed. And it is to be feared that the age of monsters is not far off.”

What had happened? First, the church of England had demanded and gotten the order that all preachers not approved by them had to resign their pulpits; when these exiled pastors came back to care for the people dying in the plague, England passed a law that no dismissed pastor could be within 5 miles of his ex-church; and finally, they passed a law that no one could preach anywhere unless they had a license from the bishop. The result of this suppression of free preaching of the Word of God was

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the descent of England into a morass of immorality, perversion, and widespread moral collapse. Just as we see the continual minimalization of Christian preaching and teaching today led by the humanists.

It is interesting to see what happened next. The moral code broke down and the crime rate rose so the ruling classes demanded severe laws to restrain criminals. When they were done with these laws, adults and children were subject to 160 different laws that resulted in hanging. Shoplifting something more valuable than one shilling, steal one sheep, harm a tree, gather fruit from someone else's property or snare a rabbit on someone else's land—every offender could be hanged. Public drunkenness was rampant and adults and children died of alcoholism by the thousands. Women and children were forced to work in factories and mines with low wages and no safety rules. England started the slave trade and created a world-wide market for men and women brought from Africa and sold to the rest of the world as property.

God raised up John and Charles Wesley and they began to preach all over England and the results were amazing. Their preaching called forth other men of God like John Milton and John Bunyan and the literature of the day, the arts of the day, and even the common talk of the day turned to a religious enthusiasm who not only transformed their lives but also transformed the social sins of England.

The revival in England spread across the English-speaking world and caused innumerable souls to turn to personal faith in Jesus Christ.

In addition to the transformed lives of individuals, the evangelical revival transformed society. Many features of modern Western society that we take for granted today resulted from the great move of God produced by this revival. The imprisonment of debtors and children was made illegal. Schools were opened to every child who wanted to learn. Harsh penal laws, child labor in mines and factories ended. The evangelical movement created the first hope for prosperity and self-respect that the forgotten masses of England had ever known. Finally, the return to the Bible brought about the greatest religious transformation known in history. Universal free schools, charities, and free hospitals were formed by Christians who found their motivation in following what Jesus said, *"You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free, **John 8:32***

Bishop Randall Davidson declared that John Wesley was "one of the greatest Englishmen who ever lived" and added that Wesley "practically changed the outlook and even the character of the English nation," In truth, it was the return to the bible that transformed England from a moral wasteland into a land based on the Word of God and faith in Jesus Christ. The only hope for North America is a similar spiritual revival based on a return to the unchanging Word of God. False teachers will be removed by God but we must be teaching the truth so that the world will see that what God has written in His word is not only true, it is the only way to live a life that will glorify all.

Our next lesson will conclude the mini-study on how God protects His people from false teachers "God Protects from All Deceivers and All Deceptions" It will be based on **II Pet 2:17-22**

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LESSON #6 “God Protects from All Deceivers and Deception” II Peter 2:17-22

We have seen in the study of **II Peter** Chapter Two that God is very intense in His desire to point out false teachers and speak of their danger. However, He seems much more intent in pointing out how little power they really have. They do not change their world, they only open the doors and let those who would sin have an excuse to do it. They will all be removed by God at some time in their false teaching career. They produce nothing. No civilization or society has ever been improved by false teachers. But they continue to appear, usually chasing the all-mighty dollar or sexual conquests.

I want to share how this false teaching influences all aspects of our life. We need to note that often false teachers arise to reflect the environment of the times. They make the environment worse, but they seldom are the ones who create the initial change in the culture. In 1938, Superman landed in America, just as the nation was emerging from the Great Depression, just before the crisis of World War II. The comic book character embodied characteristics that made America great.

Unassuming in the person of Clark Kent, Superman possessed strength and power far beyond other men. He was “faster than a speeding bullet, more powerful than a locomotive, and could jump tall buildings in a single bound!” The writers who crafted this fictional character summed up his heroic attributes: Superman stood for “Truth, Justice, and the American Way.” Superman resonated with the American public because those ideals were universally understood in the middle of the 20th Century.

But in the past 20 years, those ideals have been treated with skepticism or outright hostility. An increasing number of Americans pointedly believe that America is incapable of truth or justice. It would be hard to find a consensus on what the “American way” even means today. Certainly, across the political spectrum our elected leaders cannot even announce what that should mean.

But in recent months, the character of Superman has taken a dramatic turn. Eager to embrace the sensibilities and new thought patterns of our modern age in America, the writers who mold and shape the Superman character have decided to reveal that he is bisexual. They timed the surprise to correspond with “National Coming Out Day” in October, 2021.

To be clear, this 21st Century Superman is the son of Clark Kent and Lois Lane. Originally introduced as Super Boy, this now-grown super hero is being presented as non-heterosexual. He now has a male boyfriend and their romantic encounters will be highlighted as part of the narrative going forward.

With his ability to fly, protect the innocent from evildoers and hear the announced concerns of the entire world; Superman represented a secularized messiah in 2013. Warner Brothers at that time even commissioned a nine-page briefing entitled “Jesus: The Original Superhero,” to convince Christians to attend “Man of Steel” the latest movie in the series. Sent by his father to dwell among us, Superman’s life exemplified a fictional shadow of Christ, until now.

In a clearly messianic passage, **Psalm 2:12** advises, “do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish in the way, for His wrath may soon be kindled”. The son of Superman may still leap tall buildings and outrun speeding locomotives, but he now represents a false messiah. And the American

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Way has become a broad road celebrating deviancy and immorality, hurtling toward the judgement of God.

But soon the real Superman, the God-Man Jesus Christ, will come for His Bride. After that, He will return to reign, dwelling with us and flooding the earth with Truth and Justice. And this is not merely comic book sentiment, it is the truth, a precious promise from God.

So, as the culture changes their view of morality, everything else adapts to that view and false teachers merely get on the “moving train” and try to reap the financial and personal rewards that they want. They are not courageous, they have had the moral-busters already change the laws, make the connections and often lay the groundwork for the new levels of immorality. The false teachers just exploit it.

False Teachers are Empty Wells

Peter continues his description of false teachers in **II Peter 2** and explains how useless they are in the scheme of history and life. He begins in:

***II Peter 2:17** “These people are springs without water and mists driven by a storm. Blackest darkness is reserved for them.”*

Peter describes the greatest concern for those who live in the desert. The lands of the Middle East are not much different than the Southwest part of the United States and they have their terrible desert areas as well as the areas that get very little rainfall. Like us in the Southwest, the Middle East is always looking for rain.

Peter says that the false teachers prey on this need and desire but they come up empty. They are first of all like a well in the desert. Now, we only have to look at the travels of Abraham in what became the present land of Israel to realize how precious those wells in the desert really were. Abraham went throughout the land with his livestock and he dug wells in many places where the water could be used for the care of his animals and his caravan of people. These wells later were the source of conflicts and wars; renovation and re-digging; social gatherings; continual feeding of livestock and even today when you explore the Holy Land of Israel, over 3,500 years later you will find that many of these wells are still operational and a source of tourist interest and even more important, a source of water!

The well in the desert was and is the most welcome sight a person can find. However, Peter says these false teachers created what looked like a well, it had a rock base around an open hole, a rope and perhaps a bucket to lower, and it seemed to be the life-giving oasis the struggler needed. But the truth is, this “well” was the pretense of false teachers who acted as though they had spiritual water to quench the thirsty soul, but really had nothing to offer that had substance or life.

In the last twenty years we have often been told that some of the methods that mark the faiths of Buddhism and Hinduism are ways to realize great peace and new spiritual energy. Choosing and finding the proper mantra and reciting it until you find peace; meditating until you empty your mind and clear all thought out so you can have real peace; combining your faith or at least Christian music

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with traditional yoga poses and calling it Holy Yoga; and reaching a level of control by mental exertion where your emotions do not influence your decisions.

By and large, they have been empty wells, that promised a lot more than they delivered. Now, I do not think the concepts are evil and in fact some of the concepts are Biblical. The Bible chooses many mantras, the use of the name of Jesus to rebuke the Devil and all that is evil; the Psalms with the use of Hallelujah, Praise; and other words of worship that exalt God are used over and over with many repetitions. But unless there is spiritual power in the word that you are reciting or chanting—then how are you getting the peace producing power of God? Meditation is a strong concept in the Bible, even Jesus said *“To go into your closet and pray.”* **Matthew 6:6** But the Bible tells us to fill our mind when we meditate, not empty our mind. Fill it with Scripture, prayer, praise of God, singing of hymns and spiritual songs, and let the power of God fill your body. The idea of meditating until you empty your mind means that even your spiritual resources are forgotten and an empty mind is the playground for the devil. **I Peter 1:13** tells us to have alert minds that are thinking clearly and **Colossians 3:2** tells us: *“Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.”* I have no doubt that the positions of yoga produce a tone and betterment of your physical being and that the Christian music will penetrate the heart and the mind; but the spiritualization that often accompanies as teaching for each of the yoga positions often invites deity other than Jesus to have a place in your life. Finally, the idea of mental control over the emotions of your life is not sustainable. The greatest habit breaking group in the world, AA and all of its 12-step branches, has proven over and over again that without a higher power, you will not control your emotions well enough to have a free or fulfilled life. An addictive personality cannot be cured by mental exercises alone.

It is not just a matter of getting yourself removed from this world, it is a matter of drinking at the well of Christian and Jewish teaching and letting the cool water of the Holy Spirit fill you so that you have strength to face the day, not just enough calm to enter the next battle.

Peter says that false teachers also promise rain, plentiful rain, but do not deliver. They are like storm clouds that appear in the sky but end up being nothing more than a dry, dusty haboob. The false teachers seem to promise spiritual refreshment, but are all show and no substance. What does God think of these false teachers? He has reserved the worst areas of Hell for their eternal home. I don't know how a burning lake of fire could have good and bad areas; but **II Peter** says God has reserved the *“darkest blackness for their final home.”* I would ask you to consider where you are getting your spiritual water from. Is your faith a combination of Bible and politics? Is your faith a “lot of common sense” and some Bible thoughts? Is your faith listening to the latest and greatest and trying to make sure you are always in the know?

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False Teachers Mouth Empty Boastful Words that Appeal to the Flesh

Peter says to leave the false teachers alone and realize something else about them:

***II Peter 2:18-19** “For they mouth empty, boastful words and, by appealing to the lustful desires of the flesh, they entice people who are just escaping from those who live in error. They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity—for ‘people are slaves to whatever has mastered them.’”*

Therein lies the rub. Although false teachers possess no power, they have power when people follow them. Here Peter sounds a warning that we need to realize. God has a much more difficult time protecting us when we are playing with fire, hand-tossing live grenades, and pretending that we have discovered new ways, other than Scripture, to learn about God and serve Him. God can always protect us much easier when we want His protection.

False teachers have an extensive vocabulary and they love to put it on display. Those who are weak in the faith, searching for some new spiritual revelation or truth, or just baby Christians are often deceived by high-sounding words and often think they possess a new revelation from God. It is amazing because they often contradict the plain historic teachings of the Scripture, which many false teachers cannot really explain because they lack adequate training and divine wisdom, **I Corinthians 2:14**. They have a mish-mash of some very basic Christian truths combined with a lot of contemporary culture thought. They say nothing scholarly, spiritual, or from God.

So, since they do not have real spiritual things to offer, they appeal to a much lower level of enticement. The appeal to people on the base level of offering people a religion that the people can embrace and still hold on to their fleshly desires and sensuality. Who are most vulnerable, those who have a high level of guilt and anxiety? People with broken marriages, people who are lonely and feeling unloved, and people who are tired of the consequences of sin and are looking for a new start from religion or a new word from God. The false teachers exploit these vulnerable people.

Then Peter explains the irony of the “broken trying to fix the broken.” False teachers promise those who are struggling with immense problems; ‘just escaping from those who live in error’ freedom. This is the very thing they want and it looks so attractive to them, but Peter reminds all of us those false teachers can’t offer freedom when they are enslaved to the very things that these vulnerable Christians are trying to escape. So, we see what happens, whoever puts himself, in the name of freedom, into the hands of a false teacher, who is a prisoner himself, also becomes a prisoner. Bondage to corruption awaits all followers of false teachers.

False Teachers May Not Have Always Been So False

Peter deals with one final concern about false teachers. Those who once taught the truth may no longer be true teachers. This is a far different thought than “once in grace, always in grace” or any discussion about losing your salvation. Let’s see what Peter is saying. False teachers may not have always been so false (whether they were saved or not is not the gist of what Peter is teaching). He is saying, that they may have had great influence over people because they led them to the Lord or

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helped them to become a stronger and better Christian. At that time these teachers had totally cleansed themselves from the stench of the world and taught Christ. However, for whatever reason, they have dropped all the true teaching of Jesus out of their life and have focused on false teaching.

We see this problem on many levels. People and Churches that once stood squarely on the Scriptures and teaching the truths in the Scriptures; now take stands on moral issues that are directly opposed to the Bible. They are pro-abortion; pro gay rights; pro same sex marriage; pro gender affirming or confirming surgery; they term the Bible as a human book written by just ordinary people who also expressed their personal thoughts; and a very popular saying they frequently use is: “The Bible contains the Word of God.” The implication of the last statement is, I can choose what is the real Word of God out of the Scriptures and discard the rest because it is not the real Word of God.

One problem with this terrible change is that they are still responsible for the truth they once believed and taught. They are not excused from the truth just because they no longer teach it. Peter spends time telling us that we should be aware of what God thinks about this kind of “false teacher”. God is not pleased with them. They are not made outside the body of Christ but seem to always be raised up in the Church with one foot in Christ and one foot in the world. They are the classic, half in and half out. When they reject the truth of Christ, they frequently try to seduce others to follow their new way in an attempt to prove they have a better way and to fulfill their own self-gratification.

Peter quotes two analogies that were common in the vernacular of the day to show how these false teachers fulfill these analogies.

1. From **Proverbs 26:11** “A dog returns to its vomit.” The rest of the proverb said, “as fools return to their folly.” The false teacher just cannot give up the money, power, and fulfillment of their lust through what they teach and say. They are a slave to these items; they have no freedom and since they will not convert and let God change them, they just keep doing the same thing ‘over and over.’
2. From the common sayings of Peter’s day “A sow that is washed returns to her wallowing in the mud.” The nature of the animal has not changed. The sow returns to the mud because by nature she is still a sow, the change was only cosmetic.

Peter has really personalized this last part of teaching on false teachers and has moved away from exclusively teaching the people about the protection of God against false teachers; but now has also spoken about their responsibility. This becomes the difficult part, our friends and people we love are still with one congregation. We no longer accept the teaching and the doctrine of the church and feel that it has gotten away from Bible teaching, but we do not want to leave and hunt up a new place to worship. Or, I loved the teaching and preaching of Brother “Goodpastor” on TV and Facebook, but he is so greedy anymore. He seems to hunt up a dozen ways each week to try and sell things, or coerce people to give him more money. I’ve heard the rumors that he is not living a Godly and moral life. I’ve noticed that He doesn’t refer to the Bible very often in his preaching but seems to be introducing a lot more of his points with things out of our culture. I would love to quit listening to him but he filled a

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void in my life when I was very down and I love his sense of humor and the way he makes me laugh when he preaches.

Peter says, let me help you with your decision, are you getting any nourishment from these teaches or churches? Do you go expecting to get filled up in the Lord but leave feeling you did not get anything? Are you wanting to experience more freedom in your life but feel that your spiritual life is just more bondage, costly dues, and improper comments and discussions? Do you sense and know that the Church or the teacher you are listening to has moved away from a strong stand on the entire Word of God being the entire Word of God? Then get out of that influence in your life. You were not made to receive false teaching without it affecting how you think and how you operate.

Peter wrote this letter during a time of intense persecution and the people were often trying to just survive. We seldom experience that physical persecution but we live in a time when many of the prophetic Scripture have been fulfilled. The people of our nation no longer want to do things just like the Bible says. We are in the days of:

II Timothy 4:3-4, which says: "For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths."

The Greek word for myths literally means; "taking a kernel of truth and building a story around that truth until it is no longer a truth but just a story." To have the most blessed life possible, we also need to take the warnings of Peter to not live under the tutelage and guidance of any false teachers.

In our next Lesson, Peter tells his readers how to win the battle with scoffers. You do not out argue them, you just out wait them. "The Protection from the Scoffers" **II Peter 3:1-7**.

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LESSON #7 “Protection from the Scoffers” II Peter 3:1-7

In this Lesson, we will deal with a very relevant subject. The rise of ‘scoffers,’ especially religious scoffers in our age. It is not enough to just point them out. Anyone who reads extensively, or listens to the news, realizes that the Bible is under attack; that morality continues to plunge towards no rules and no limits; and that the evangelical voice in the United States is not a large majority, but actually a rather small minority of people. I want us in this session to see that God is very aware of the rise of scoffers, in fact He foretold that they would be prolific in the end times and that they would attack everything related to Jesus and the morals of the Bible. So, what did God propose as a solution to this vast increase in the numbers of scoffers?

In a word, God told us in this passage of *II Peter* that we are studying, that word is “judgment”. Ironically, that is a word that is not used much inside or outside of the Church. Even the scoffers scoff at the word judgment and like Marx of old, say it is one of the ways that religion controls the people, ‘the opiate of the people’. Because judgment produces fear, it is considered one of the ways the Church has controlled the people and kept them doing what the Church wanted.

I want us to first of all realize that “judgment” is not a word that should cause fear in anyone of us. People are not only found guilty when judged but many people are also found innocent. The Christian should realize that a lot of the terms that God used to define us are legal terms, that mean we have been judged and found innocent. Justification is one such word. When the blood of Jesus interceded for our sins and was poured over the guilt that was in our lives, we ended up justified, innocent and without any charge. When we are sanctified, we are declared holy by God and consecrated for His work. When we are purified, we have been declared without spot or blemish. The Bible uses these words along with the very familiar word salvation, we are saved, to show that judgment has no hold over a Christian. Judgment for believers is a day of liberation, when Jesus declares that our allowing Him to have our sins and remove them from our past has made us worthy to be in heaven with Him forever.

Judgment will be the final release that God gives to His followers that they will justifiably be declared His and will be with Him forever. I want us to take a closer look at the word judgment as we see it relate to both believers and non-believers.

No Judgement for Obedient Christians

The wrath of God will be poured out on sin because God is not only loving, full of grace and oozing with mercy; He is also a God of justice, righteousness, and holiness. He will judge sin in the life of everyone, but He also promises that for the obedient Christian, there will be no sin to judge.

What we often fail to recognize is that God has prophesied that there will be two judgments at the end of life on this earth.

1. The Great white throne of judgment is a judgment that will seal the destiny of unbelievers. Since they did not accept Jesus as their Savior, they will only have their good works to argue

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for their salvation into heaven. But God does not grade on the curve or grant heaven to those who only have good works. People cannot earn their way into heaven, they will all be lost.

2. For those who have accepted Jesus into their lives and allowed Him to give them salvation, there will be a judgment much earlier in time. It is called the Bema Seat of Judgment and it will not be for salvation or entrance into heaven, but it will be held for believers to learn what their rewards and what the degree of those rewards will be from their life on this earth.

I want to emphasize again that those of us who have been born again through faith in Jesus will never be judged for our sins. That's because Jesus took that judgment for us as He hung on the Cross and shed His blood for our sins.

Hebrews 9:28 *“So Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and He will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for Him.”*

This is a great “Praise the Lord verse”, because we see that the Lord always intended for judgment to be a reward time for those who accept Him and believe in Him. The Bible has many references to the elimination of our forgiven sins in the mind of God: **Psalms 103:12** says He will remove them as far as the East is from the West; **Jeremiah 31: 34** says God will remember our sins no more; and **Micah 7:19** says God will cast our sins into the depth of the sea. And as Corrie ten Boom used to say, “He has put a sign there that says, ‘No Fishing!’”

Theologian Paul Enns has noted that “because God is holy, He must judge all that is unholy or He would no longer be holy. Judgment is a necessary expression of God’s own character.” Henry Thiessen wrote, “the whole philosophy of the future judgments rests upon the sovereign right of God to punish the disobedient.” He then provides a Biblical summary regarding God’s right to judge:

1. Abraham called God the judge of the earth
2. Hannah said the Lord would judge the ends of the earth
3. David spoke of the Lord coming to judge the earth
4. David also said the Lord has established His throne for judgment.

But the New Testament is even more frequent in the idea of God having His judgment for the world.

1. Jesus said, *“For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and will then recompense every man according to his deeds.”* **Matthew 16:27**
2. Paul declared that God *“fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed.”* **Acts 17:31**
3. The writer of Hebrews says, that after death comes the judgment, **Hebrews 9:27**

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4. John wrote, *“I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne to be judged.”* **Revelation 20:12**
5. God has given assurance of this fact of judgment by raising Christ, the judge, from the dead. **Acts 17:31.**

As we repent of our sins and place our faith in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, we find that our only judgment will be to determine the rewards that we will be given.

Five Danger Signs of a Church of Scoffers

Alisa Childers wrote an article about Progressive Christianity to speak of her families experience in a Church that turned from following the Bible to be scoffers of the word. She told of a time several years ago when her husband and her began to attend a local Evangelical non-denominational church and loved it. They had a great sense of community, a loving and authentic people, and a pastor with great intellect. But the Church went off the rails theologically and now title themselves: “A Progressive Christian Community.” It is hard to pin down exactly what that is, but she mentions five danger signs to watch for in a church that becomes a church of scoffers.

1. **A Lowered View of the Bible:** it is termed a human book; people openly disagree with what it says; the Bible condemns things we no longer find offensive; and the old stand-by, “The bible contains the word of God.”
2. **Feelings are Emphasized Over Facts:** personal experiences, feelings, and opinions are valued above the objective truth of the Bible; what a person feels is true is good enough to guide them; I just don’t feel good about this Bible verse; I thought homosexuality was a sin until I met and befriended some gay people; or I just can’t believe that Jesus would send good people to hell.
3. **Essential Christian Doctrines are Reinterpreted;** all traditional dogma and doctrine are fair game to be changed because they are the result of flawed human interpretation; and one might hear people say the virgin birth of Jesus or the resurrection of Jesus don’t have to be factual to speak truth; the church has an archaic position on sexuality and needs to make it more modern; and of course, the idea of a literal hell is just offensive and needs to be reinterpreted or at least rephrased.
4. **Historic Terms Get Redefined:** words and phrases are redefined without ever discussing the new framework. So, the Bible is inspired, but only like good sermons, moving songs, and Christian novels are inspired; love is an all-encompassing word that means non-confrontational, pleasant, and affirming; God would not punish anyone--He is love; or the favorite, it is not our job to talk to anyone about sin, it’s our job to love them.
5. **Heart of the Gospel Message Shifts From Sin and Redemption to Social Justice:** the verses about salvation are minimalized and the verses about social justice are the focus; sin doesn’t separate us from God; we are made in His image and He called us good; God didn’t actually

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require a sacrifice for our sins, the early Christians adapted animal sacrifices from pagans; or their favorite, we don't really need to preach the gospel, we just need to show love by bringing justice to the oppressed and provision to the needy.

Identifying the signs is somewhat hard but the effort of scoffers is to disarm the Church and leave it disarmed of its saving power. Jesus warned about the false teachers and scoffers:

Matthew 7:15 *“Watch out for false prophets who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.”*

Pure Wholesome Thoughts Resists False Teachers

Peter begins the third chapter of II Peter by writing:

II Peter 3:1-2 *“Dear Friends, this is now my second letter to you. I have written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking. I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets, and the command given by our Lord and Savior through your apostles.”*

Peter knows that he is writing to Christians who are survivors. They have faced physical persecution and death almost every day of their life and they are hardened by what has happened. He appeals to that part of their knowledge and life that has gotten them this far safely.

Namely, that they stimulate the pure and wholesome thinking that allowed them to stand up to false teachers, persecutors and now a barrage of scoffers. Scoffers have multiplied like rabbits in our day. Once where you had verbal agnostics and atheists only teaching on higher education levels, the University, now they are throughout even our elementary schools. Where you might have a few Bible doubters in the community, now it is often hard to find a community that has a majority of Christians in the community who believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God.

In such a world, Peter says *“Remember what you were taught!”* Remember those promises and prophecies in the Bible and remember what Jesus has taught you and what His Apostles have written to you.

It is the truth they already knew that would detect and refute the false teachers and the scoffers of their day. Just the reality of the Second Coming of Christ is recorded in over 260 chapters of the Bible and they contain over 300 references to the fact that He is coming back.

Armed with these vital pieces of information, remember what you were taught; revere the Scriptures as your source of truth; and think wholesome and pure thoughts about the power and ability of God.

Enemy of the Believer, ‘The Scoffer’

Peter moves to explain the present enemy of the believer. It is the “scoffer”. Our biggest enemy is the scoffer and the power that they exert over our families and those who we have trained to know Jesus as Lord. They will deny the judgment and steal the hope of believers. They attack the fundamentals of Christian belief, especially the Second Coming of Jesus and the eschatology of the Bible, not with logic but with ridicule. They attempt to make those teachings look archaic and hateful. This will get worse

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and worse as the last days continue. **Acts 2:17** tells us in the very first Christian sermon that started the Church, the last days started when the Messiah came to earth: In the sermon, Peter explains what is happening with all the people hearing in their own tongues, and quotes Joel:

***Acts 2:17** “In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people, your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.”*

They will increase just as the labor pains of a woman bearing a child increase until the precise time when Jesus returns. Scoffers will be at an all-time high number just as Jesus comes to rapture His bride-the Church. They will walk, or should I say, "parade" in their lusts, declaring they are right and all who oppose them are haters, mockers, and deniers of people being able to love each other. Scoffers who do not know the truth and do not know God have nothing to restrain their lusts. They particularly mock the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, because they want to pursue impure sexual pleasure without consequences or without facing any Divine judgment. They want an eschatology that fits their conduct:

***I John 2:28** “And now, dear children, continue in Him, so that when He appears we may be confident and unashamed before Him at His coming.”*

Peter says that the scoffers will especially ridicule the fact that Jesus has not come to earth yet and therefore the idea of God judging the earth with cataclysmic events is ludicrous and mean. They base this argument on “uniformitarianism,” the laws of nature have always operated a set way, and always will, and since we have never had a cataclysmic event, we won’t have one. That is why the pandemic, the present climate situation in the world, the increase of heat in the world, the destruction of cropland, etc. will never be interpreted right by scoffers but they will always need to have a villain that is causing these problems in life.

They have moved so far beyond the idea that God may judge the world and punish the wicked that it is “downright tears flowing out of the eyes funny to them.” They would not reasonably entertain a discussion about the Second Coming of Jesus, “it has never happened and it never will” would be the statement of the scoffer.

Peter continues on to tell us another trait of the scoffer, since they do not want to have Jesus offer any judgment on them, they ignore the two major divine cataclysmic events, creation and the flood. The creation was the first interruption into the idea that all has happened in uniformity. God took an empty space, stepped into it and from water, separated the heavens above and the earth below, and He fashioned the earth we know. Not something that evolved over billions of years, but something God created in a week, well actually in 6 days of 24 hours each. But when mankind, who because of the conditions of the earth lived great long lives, **Genesis 5** in a paradise that produced all the fruits, nuts, vegetables and seeds imaginable. They became so wicked they were destroying mankind; God sent a flood judgment upon them that cleansed the earth of the scoffers and false teachers of that day. They all drowned.

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What Will Happen to Scoffers in Our Day?

Then Peter reminds the readers of what will happen to scoffers in our day:

***II Peter 3:7** “By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.”*

God has created two world orders: the first was creation from nothing and the second the reconstructed world after the flood. But Peter reminds them, and us, that God is also going to create a third world order. For the sinful elements of this world must be burnt up in the heavens atmosphere and the earth and replaced with an eternal heaven and earth that will never need any refinement. The fact the heavens and the earth will be cleansed by fire for a third world order is commonly taught in the Bible: ***Isiah 66:15; Daniel. 7:9-10; Micah 1:4; Malachi 4:1; Matthew 3:11-12; II Thessalonians 1:7-8*** are some. Just a few natural sources could be: stars, comets, asteroids; or the boiling lake of fire in the core of the earth separated from the part of the earth we live in by a thin 10-mile crust; or the ability of atoms to not only make bombs but also atomic energy capable of destroying everything. God has a plan and the earth waits for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly people when God’s final time of judgment is sealed. The godly will no longer be here when that happens, I ***Thessalonians 1:10, 5:9.***

This leads we to the final question of this session, “Are you smarter than Jesus?” That is a question that could be asked of every scoffer on the earth. Just because they believe and say that Evangelical Christians are on the wrong side of history and are ancient relics clinging to a worldview that all intelligent, right-thinking people have rejected does not make it true. Since they disparage the Word of God, written form, which the Bible tells us is Jesus in the Word, they ridicule and disparage Jesus also. They in essence say, “Yes, we know more than Jesus.” We have figured out what is really true, not what he taught and said on this earth. But Jesus did not simply come to earth, to carry sheep around his neck, pray blessings over babies and tell us to love one another. In His short 33 years on this earth, He had a lot to say about right and wrong and laid down a moral code that He expected His followers to follow. Jesus believed in Heaven and Hell; He taught that sexual immorality is wrong and called it fornication; and He clearly taught that He was the only way to heaven. Anything else that any scoffer says is not only wrong, it is a sure sign that they consider themselves smarter than Jesus.

But let me leave you with one last personal thought. Every time that you or I deviate from the teachings of Jesus to satisfy a critic or to defend our faith against a scoffer, we also are saying that we are smarter than Jesus. Really, are we a better source of knowledge about life and death, about God and man, about Heaven and Hell, about the importance of eternal truths of life than Jesus was? Let’s do a quick check:

- How many lepers did we restore body parts for?
- How many storms have you told to quit and they did?
- How many blind people can now see because of you?

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Where were you at Creation, at the Flood, at the Virgin birth of Jesus, at the death of Jesus on the cross for our sins? We have become scoffers, also, if we think that we are smarter than Jesus.

Next, Peter addresses the “Protection of God’s Patience” II ***Peter 3:8-13***.

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LESSON #8 “The Protection of God’s Patience” II Peter 3:8-13

In this Lesson, we will be studying ‘Protection of God’s Patience’. One of the areas of protection that Peter says God offers is seldom viewed as protection but often as an irritating prolongment. God protects His people with His patience. Most Christian people are not only bad at patience; they are even more frustrated when they try to figure out the ‘patience of God’. They feel, God does not handle wrong quickly enough; God lets the wicked stay alive and seemingly prosper while the righteous are often mistreated or even put to death; and God must just not realize how bad it is here on earth or He would come down here and put a stop to all this crime, wickedness, and debauchery.

Who is God?

Perhaps we need to remind ourselves of the “God of Creation.” One of the greatest questions we can ask ourselves is: “Who is God?”

Christians assert that God is the Creator but a more accurate statement is that the Creator of everything is God. The very name “God” designates a status. The being who surpasses everything holds the rank of “God.” Clearly the creation event in **Genesis 1:1** is the key to this understanding of who God really is. We conceive of the highest being by reckoning that He is the ultimate source or cause, of everything, and He is uncaused. He has always existed, and all other things owe their very existence to Him. These truths reflect upon God’s very essence and His eternal attributes which He doesn’t share with any created thing. **Psalm 96:4-5** sums it up great: “*For great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; He is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the nations are idols, but the Lord made the heavens.*” Jesus is Divine because He also was creator.

Colossians 1:15-17, “*The Son is the image of the invisible God, the first-born over-all creation. For in Him all things were created, things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities, all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together;*”

John 1:1-4 “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things came into being through Him and apart from Him not even one thing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life and that life was the light of all mankind.*”

The Bible is very clear, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit made all that has been made and they have direct ownership and control of all that has been made. Our impatience towards God makes no more sense than the preschooler crying and fussing at his mother while she is fixing him food because he does not have something to eat right now. It is like the teenager who was not invited to the Prom and in despair says, “No one wants me, I’ll never be able to get married.”

Or the adult who has had a prayer that does not seem to be answered and says, “God never answers any of my prayers, what good is it to even pray?” If that is the level of impatience you exhibit in your life, then you do not see the real protection of the patience of God. You only see the patience of God

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as a colossal downer that does not deal with the issues of right and wrong. This lack of acceptance of the power and providence of God spins a life out of control.

When NASA launched the Saturn V rocket on missions to land a man on the moon in the 1960's, technology was pushing the envelope. To this day the audacity of what American engineers pulled off with rudimentary computers and slide-rule calculations boggles the mind. While it might seem obvious that flight controllers simply needed to point the giant rocket at the moon and light the engine, the actual flight planning was much more complicated. In order to arrive at the proper spot to enter lunar orbit (without slamming into the moon or straying off into interplanetary space,) astronauts had to know exactly where their mission began, and where they were throughout the flight. This is no different for Christians who are relying on the patience of God as a protection for them and their destiny.

Many people today are hurtling through life without giving much thought to where they are going. Their apparent indifference about their destination follows their apathy about their origin and their dismissal of where they are right now spiritually and morally.

Believers Have an Eternal Perspective

We, as believers, are called to have an eternal perspective. We realize that this life is not “all there is,” and that God created us to outlive this earthly life. Having put our trust in Jesus Christ, we know who we are and where we are going, and trusting in the eyewitness accounts of God about the beginning, we know where we began as a species and why so much sin and suffering is a part of our world today.

Some Christians foolishly discount the importance of appreciating our origins. But God revealed His firsthand account of the Creation because He wanted us to understand, how and why He created the earth, and all in it; the state of the earth prior to the first sin, the reason that sin put a curse upon the earth and all people, and the promise of a Deliverer to set all things right again.

Many of these same believers show surprisingly little interest in the revelation Jesus has given in the bible about the end of this earth. They live in the here and now, resigned to the expectation that it will all pan out in time. Again, God chose to reveal His plan for all mankind to give us hope and to alert us to the signs we should be watching for in the end of the last days.

So, until you know where you are going; and where you have been, you can never appreciate the protection of the patience of God; but will always interpret it through your wants and desires.

Let me put that in perspective for each of us tonight before we study this end-time passage in depth. Whether you come from generations of prosperity or abject poverty, you are part of a creation that was once declared to be very good **Genesis 1:31**. In spite of the disobedience and rebellion of people, the One who sits on the throne of heaven has promised to “make all things new” **Revelation 21:5**. If you have put your faith in Jesus Christ, you are already a new creature; the old you has passed away, and behold the new you has come, **II Corinthians 5:17**. Knowing the beginning and the end, you can make sense of where you are, and know where you are headed.

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Psalms 139:14 David wrote: *“I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, and my soul knows it very well.”*

Time was Created by God for Humans

Let’s explore how Peter tells each of us that “the patience of God is a great protection for every believer.” The passage begins with Peter reminding us that God does not operate by what we call time. Time was created by God for humans, when God created lights to separate day from night ***Genesis 1:14***. God did not need that separation and it will not be a part of our eternal life. In eternity we will have no night. ***Rev. 21:25***. God does not operate by time, He controls time. God is never too early and He is never too late, His timing is just right because He is in control of time. With those facts in mind, Peter writes:

II Peter 3:8 *“But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years and a thousand years are like a day.”*

The subject that Peter is addressing is the message by the scoffers that the Second Coming of Jesus is not going to happen. Life goes on in a uniform way and since Jesus has not come, He will not come. The ridicule is both towards Jesus, who they say does not keep His word and did not teach ‘all the truth’ and the true believers because they believe in a myth, an event that will never happen.

God understands time in a far different way—He created it because humans would need it to commemorate special days, times and seasons. From the viewpoint of people, the coming of Christ seems to be a long way off, *“A thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night!”* ***Psalms 90:4*** But from God’s viewpoint, it is not long at all. This might also have been a teaching that reminded the listeners that the end of the final Tribulation will be exactly 1,000 years before the New Heaven and the New Earth appear ***Revelation 20-21***. In both illustrations, Peter is pointing out that God is in control and when the time is exactly right, He will act.

The next passage really speaks to how God operates in this area of time and points out how the patience of God is one of our true protections.

II Peter 3:9 *“The Lord is not slow in keeping His promises, as some understand slowness. Instead, He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”*

Peter just lays it out for all of his readers, God does not hold back or become hesitant to finish what He started, He just has a higher motivation than getting something done “by what we call, on time!”

God Wants All to be Saved

He has patience, because He does not want anyone to be lost and His ultimate desire is that everyone He ever created would be saved and spend eternity in heaven with Him. God literally waits for them to be saved; ***Galatians 4:4; Titus 2:1; Hebrews 6:18, 10:23; 10:37; and Revelation 19:11***. Let me show you the perspective of God:

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Hebrews 10:36-37 *“You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what He has promised. For, ‘In just a little while, He who is coming will come and will not delay.’”*

God has the patience and the providence to know just how long to wait until everyone who would accept Him has done so. That becomes the right time for Him to act. This immense patience of God is seen over and over in the bible when it comes to times of His judgment of wrath; **Joel 2:13; Luke 15:20; Romans 9:22**, and **I Peter 3:15**, are just some of the many Scriptures that tell this truth. God does not send judgment until everyone who will accept Jesus has had the opportunity to do so.

I do not think most of us stop and realize what God endures to maintain this great Protection by His Patience. God endures endless blasphemies against His name, constant rebellion of the impatient, murders and slandering’s of His people, and the ever increasing breaking of His laws, while God is still calling and saving those who really belong to Him. It is not slackness or impotence that delays final judgment, it is the patience of God. He is not willing that anyone perish. God cares that much about each and every person that will respond to His call to be saved. This cannot be God being patient until everyone on earth is saved, because the entire passage is speaking about the blessings of eternal life for those who are faithful contrasted to the destruction of the wicked and those who refuse to accept Jesus as their savior. This judgment is for the one who loves sin more than they love eternal life.

The Day of the Lord Will Come

Peter then declares that the Day of the Lord and the judgment which follows will definitely come:

II Peter 3:10 *“But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar, the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.”*

The Day of the Lord is a theological term that speaks of the times when God’s judgment intervenes and changes history. Here it is speaking of a time when God will end the world that we know by fire. The Bible makes it clear that this Day of the Lord is noted for darkness, damnation, the destruction of the enemies of the Lord and the establishment of a new world order. It will be the climax event of the seven years of tribulation on the earth. It will have been telegraphed for seven years to those who understand the Bible and interpret the prophecies of the end times, but to the evil and deranged leaders of this planet, it will come like a thief in the night. Why, because they have been insanely involved in trying to solve the Tribulation problems, the bowl and trumpet judgments of God’s wrath through the deranged thinking and solutions of mankind. They have been caught in the political malaise of the world-wide power struggle caused by the Anti-Christ demanding that the entire world worship him. It will be a surprise; unexpected, sudden and disastrous to such people.

Peter outlines what will happen at that time. Several areas will be cleansed and purified by fire.

1. **First**, will be the heavens, this is a reference to the physical universe where we live. It will be accompanied by a great crackling, a great roar, as objects are consumed by this universal fire. It will be unlike any fire that we have ever seen, because it will engulf the atmosphere above us; the universe around it; and also, the earth. This will probably be just a cleansing

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for the Millennial Kingdom, but it will be complete when the new heavens and the new earth are being fashioned. It will be such a powerful fire that it will disintegrate all matter as we know it.

2. **Second**, the elements will all be destroyed. This starts with the elements that made up the earth, but it is much larger than that. It also includes the atoms, neutrons, protons, and electrons that make up every living thing on this earth. They will disintegrate and be destroyed. Nothing will be left that has been touched and affected by the sin of the world.
3. **Third**, the earth as we know it will be no more. The mountains will be lowered and Mt. Zion will be the highest mountain on the earth in the Millennial Kingdom; the land masses will reattach as they were before the flood; the deeps of waters will be restored; the waters of the sky will be restored; and the earth will become a second Garden of Eden. But, it will have to be stripped bare and cleansed by fire before any of the reconstruction will happen.
Isaiah 24:19-20; 34:4

This process will be repeated at the end of the Millennial Kingdom and this time the earth will be prepared for eternal life and the welcoming of the New Heaven, New Jerusalem which God will present to all of His believers. The reshaping at the time of the final judgment of the devil will be so total that all seas will disappear and everything that could cause injury or death will be absent.

Peter asks a very natural question, if that is what is going to happen, then ‘what kind of people should we be’ ‘how should we live our life?’ This is not really a question; it is a challenge. Like the coach that says, to a group of boys he is coaching, “the other team thinks we are a bunch of sissies and we play like girls.” What are we going to do about that?

It is a clear challenge to conform your life to match the expectations of Christ and share in eternal life and spare yourself going through the judgment or the Day of the Wrath of God. But I want us to see that even this challenge to us to live like the Lord expects is only possible because of the Protection of God’s Patience. So, many people who talk about their miraculous conversions also talk about the times that God spared their life. How true, it meets every criteria of this passage, if God knew that you would accept Him as Lord and Savior in the future, then He will patiently spare you until that happens. The patience of God instead of delaying solutions and just causing impatience on our part is really the only thing that often stands between us and judgment right now.

“What should we do” Peter says, *“live holy lives, separate yourself from sin and live as God intended,”* live Godly lives, let your attitude and your heart be given to following the teaching of Jesus? Yes, we are to give our conduct to God, but we should not do that without also giving Him our heart. It prevents legalism and judgmentalism on our part.

The passage ends with Peter telling us how to handle the Patience of God. Not only enjoy the protection that it offers, but relish in the pure joy of what it means to each one of us. Live in anticipation and expectation of what God has patiently protected you to enjoy, a new heaven and a

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new earth, new not only in chronology, time, but also new in quality, unlike what came before. It will be bathed in righteousness and smothered in the presence of God.

Timeline of God

I want us to follow the time-line of God to see how His patience has been our protection. The fundamental truth is that we are all people who sin and left alone that sin will lead to our death; but God has provided a Sacrifice, His perfect Son, who at the RIGHT TIME came to die for us and offer us eternal life.

Jesus was the one that was needed, a perfect man who never sinned. Only such a person who did not deserve to die could legitimately serve as a substitute for all of us who really deserved death. That was Jesus. Peter said:

I Peter 2:22 *“He Jesus committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth,*

John 3:5 John wrote: *“in Him (Jesus) there is no sin.”*

Hebrews 4:15 The author of Hebrews stated that Jesus can *“sympathize with our weaknesses”* because He was *“tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.”* .

Jesus was the only person who has ever lived who did not deserve to die because He did not sin. When He died, he did so voluntarily, taking upon Himself the sins, past, present and future, of all those who place their acceptance in Him.

Because God was so patient that He sent Jesus at just the right time,

Romans 6:23 tells us *“The wages of sin is death, BUT, the free gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord.”*

And that, my friends, is a great reason for shouting, “HALLELUJAH!” right now.

That protection of God’s patience has been given to you and me for our lives and we live as saved people not because we were so clever to figure out the great mystery, but because God, in His patience, kept giving us His truth and kept us alive until our hearts opened up and we accepted Him as the one who saves us.

Thank goodness for the Patience of God.

In our last session we will see that God wants to protect us from ever going to hell. Study **II Peter 3:14-18** to prepare for the Bible study session.

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LESSON #9 “Protection from Ever Going to Hell” II Peter 3:14-18

Our study of II Peter continues with the last Lesson titled, “Protection from Ever Going to Hell”. It is clear that God has created dozens of ways that He protects His followers and the last few verses of this letter to persecuted Christians is no exception. God does have warnings to stay faithful to the Lord and don’t turn away and He shows the reason for that warning. It is because, if we are faithful, He is always faithful and we will be with Him forever.

We live in a nation and world that has misinterpreted about everything you can about the Bible. The idea that the Bible is the inspired Word of God and that all of it is inspired is a decaying and dying mindset in our world. We live in a world of false teachers claiming truths that are non-Biblical and anti-Biblical; a world of scoffers, who laugh at the things that they think are ridiculous or even just things they do not like to read in the Scriptures; and a world of cynics, who think heaven and hell; the virgin birth; the resurrection of the dead by the Lord; and almost everything to do with the role of God in our life is a myth; and the result is that many Christian are often left without the strong hope that God intended us to have.

I think that is what Peter is saying to the Christians who receive this letter. He knows they are growing weary but He wants them to remember that God makes all things new. There is a great danger in overthinking and dwelling on the mistakes that you have made; it often leads to intense pessimism. A pessimism that stems from feeling things so strongly or seeing your faults and blemishes magnified and therefore way too vivid for you to deal with them. It becomes an unreal but very confining way to live your life. If that, is you at all, take heart, because Jesus had a disciple who had this very same problem, and his name was Thomas. Jesus did not condemn him for his skepticism or the harsh show-me attitude he exhibited, but gently encouraged him to embrace the evidence of a greater reality. Jesus told Thomas to find hope and help in the reality of who Jesus was and what He could do for each person.

I have seen it often in the life of good but tired Christian people. What starts out as a strong reminder to “self” that you need to shape up and not be that person you used to be; can often leave some believers thinking that they are not really saved and they are bound for hell. What a shame and Peter tells us how to avoid this malaise of negativity in our life. He said since you are looking forward to the time when God cleanses and purges the heavens and the earth to prepare them for His return to the earth realize one thing; if you stay close to Him, He will continue to cleanse you as well and use you mightily in His new kingdom.

We live in an era where the results of long-time discouragement and despair are evident all around us. Prolonged homelessness; drug addiction; pain medication addiction; and suicide are at epidemic levels because many see no way out of their situation or the awful choices they have made in their life. COVID did not help that at all, and the protocols put in place only increased the suicide rate and the sense of deep discouragement. Those who had trouble facing themselves and the things they disliked

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about themselves found life unbearable when society demanded that they not meet, greet and eat together.

Jesus Promises to Make Us New

In the first recorded miracle of Jesus, Jesus demonstrated His power over matter, space, and time. He changed water into wine during a wedding feast in Cana **John 2**. This same Jesus, nailed to a cross, died, buried in a borrowed grave, rose again to life and ascended into heaven as His disciples gazed on intently! He has promised to make us new again. We have to let that happen and we have to believe the new me is the one that Jesus wanted me to be all along. He loves the new you and when Jesus makes you new, just remember, He never makes anything wrong or junky, it is always top-notch.

David, a mighty king in the Bible sought comfort and help when he was overwhelmed by the horror of his own sin. He fasted and prayed for seven days following Nathan's rebuke. **Psalms 51** captures his great sorrow and repentance. We can hear the sorrow and contrition in his voice when he calls out:

Psalms 51:10-11 *“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from your presence and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.”*

The shepherd King David had witnessed King Saul descend into mental anguish and confusion when the Spirit of the Lord departed from him. He was desperate to stay close to God and understood that his own sin had threatened that relationship. His broken spirit and contrite heart were all that David needed, to feel again the love and presence of the Lord and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Thankfully, we also have the opportunity to seek newness from the Lord from any sin we commit and we have an even better sacrifice. Jesus Christ gave up His life so that we might have His innocent blood cover and erase our sin. We are constantly made new and have that new heart and new spirit that God promised to those who believe and accept Him.

Hope of a New Heaven and New Earth

But wait, there is even more when we study in depth the newness that Jesus will create out of our lives and out of all that has been touched by sin. In **Revelation 21**, John saw a new heaven and a new earth. Speaking of the coming future in the past tense, he observed that the first heaven and the first earth had passed away and there was no longer any sea. He watched as New Jerusalem came down out of sky. The voice of God validated the name of the city foretold in Ezekiel, **Ezekiel 49:35** *“Yahweh Shammah”* the Lord is there. John said **Revelation 21:3** *“Behold the tabernacle of God is among men and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people and God Himself will be among them.”* The Lord promised there will no longer be **Revelation 21:4** *“any mourning or crying, or pain, the first things have passed away”*. Then He said, **Revelation 21:5** *“behold, I am making all things new. Write for these things are faithful and true.”* We know that we are promised glorified bodies which will be like the body of Jesus following His resurrection. They will not wear out or grow old. They will be not be subject to time or space and yet will be able to enjoy food and touch.

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“Human factor engineers” speak of a phenomenon called sensory overload. That occurs when your five senses take in more information than your brain can process, causing your mind or body to either shut down or to flee from the overwhelming stimulation. Our natural senses can be so heightened that we are unaware of what is happening in the spiritual part of our life. That is exactly what happened with Elisha’s servant *II Kings 6*, Elijah too, came to realize that God often speaks in a whisper instead of a cacophony of noise *I Kings 19:11-13*.

While you await your glorified body, make a point to shut out the clamor in order to hear the voice of the Lord. He has already given you a heart that is attuned to His. As His sheep, you will hear the Great Shepherd speaking to your heart. Praise Him for making you a new creature in Christ and for the glorified body that awaits you when you meet Him face to face.

Let’s look at how Peter told us we can make that happen. Peter wrote in *Peter 3:14* “So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him (God).” What does it mean to have peace with God in the area of eternal reward and eternal punishment?

The Punishment of God is Not for Believers

We need to first of all listen to what the Bible tells us about the punishment of God. Jesus told a parable about the end times when he spoke about the separation of the sheep and the goats, the saved and the unsaved in *Matthew 25*. This passage is something that every believer should remember when those times of deep personal despair and even self-loathing overwhelm them.

Jesus said, *Matthew 25:41* “Then He will say to those on His left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.’” This should be one of the greatest statements of release and freedom in our lives. Jesus clearly said that “the eternal fire”, we call it Hell, but that is just another name for Hades, the abode of the dead, the Bible calls it Gehenna, which means a place of eternal fire. Gehenna was created for the Devil and His angels and you must fall into that classification for you to spend your eternal life in the eternal fire. Some ways to do that are simple:

1. Deny Jesus
2. Those who are not with me are against me
3. Refuse to follow God as your Savior and Lord
4. Revert to worldly ways

Follow the leadership of the Devil while you reject and refuse the leadership of Jesus as your Lord and Savior, will all align you with the Devil and classify you as one of his angels. But to those who accept Jesus as Lord and Savior and who seek His forgiveness and seek to live for Him, that can never happen to them. No matter what you were taught about one unconfessed sin left in your life before you die; suicide, something many were taught from which you can never repent; absent from spiritual places or inactive in the work of the Lord before you die; or even wandering in the world after your conversion

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but then returning to let Jesus be your Lord and Savior; none of those will send you to ‘eternal fire’. That was not the purpose that God created a place of eternal fire and those who live there will be there because in some major way they made the Devil the leader of their life, either directly in worship of him or indirectly in the worship of sins. All sin was authored by the Devil, so when sin becomes the god of your life, you become an angel of the Devil.

Another teaching of Jesus about those who will spend eternity in ‘the eternal fire’ or Gehenna is His discussion with the Jewish leaders in **John 8**. Jesus makes three points in that discussion which all lead us to see that God’s Protection is Intended to keep us Out of Hell:

1. Only sin can make you a slave to the wrong that you are doing. It will enslave you and capture you, then you belong not to God but to the author of sin, the Devil. But Jesus tells us all a truth that you should utter each time the idea that you could be hell-bound enters your mind: He said: *“So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”* If you seek and accept Jesus and the truth that He has to offer, then you belong to Christ and Christ will set you free.
2. Being on the side of the Devil means you have to refuse and rebuke what Jesus has to offer and you have to choose what the Devil is offering as the way you want to live. You will have to reject Jesus and think of Him as someone who has duped you into a false way of living and choose instead to follow the Devil.
3. If you love and accept Jesus and stay faithful to Him, you can never escape the fact that He will take you to Heaven with Him. He does not allow anyone to take His children out of His hands.

Believers Do Not Fear Judgement, Rather Enjoy the Peace of Christ

When Christ returns for you, whether it is before He returns to take all Christians from the earth, the Rapture, or at the time of the Rapture; each believer should be found enjoying the peace of Christ, which assures no worry or fear about the Day of the Lord and about the Judgment or even the Wrath of God. **Philippians 4:6-7** This means we must accept the assurance of salvation, those saved by Jesus will always be a part of His family and live a life of obedience to Jesus. It is at this last point that so many Christians begin to lose their confidence. They focus on the times they have not done all that God might want them to do; they think of sins that still have some hold on their life; they see that everything they say and do is not the best they could have done; and they begin to worry that this lack of being totally spotless and blameless will somehow jeopardize their eternal salvation and they might be hell-bound. Did you see what Peter just said to each of us? If we are looking forward to the day when God cleanses the heavens and the earth and prepares it for the Millennial Kingdom and later reshapes the New Earth to receive the New Heaven, then make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with God.

We need to claim the same position that many of our spiritual ancestors did in the Bible when confronted with their own fleshly feebleness in the bible. We need to confess it and repent of it and

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ask God to forgive us. If we had to be at a point in which we were completely spotless and blameless, we would need to coordinate our acceptance of Christ, our baptism into Christ and our reception of the Holy Spirit as the final acts of our earthly life. Jesus did not just die for the sins that you commit before you ask Him to come into your heart and save you from sin. He also died for every sin that you will commit after He is your Lord and Savior.

Repentance is not a one-time act that you can brush your hands and say that is done, it is something that becomes a part of your prayer life and your spiritual life so you will always be “at peace with God.”. When you make those kinds of efforts to stay at peace with God, you will know that you are Heaven-Bound and never hell-bound.

God is Patience and Long Suffering

Peter goes ahead and speaks of the great protection of the patience of God that we examined last week and he writes: *“Bear in mind that our Lord’s patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave to Him.”*

Most people are not patient, and that makes it hard for them to understand what God is saying at this point. But God is not only patient, He is longsuffering as we saw in **II Peter 3:9**. People who misunderstand the longsuffering patience of God tend to make two mistakes about Him: some conclude He is an angry, vindictive tyrant; while others decide He is indifferent to the evil in the world.

Neither of these conclusions is anywhere near the truth. God is pained by the wickedness of our thoughts and actions. He is deeply concerned about the cruelty of war and the oppressions of the weak by the strong. God’s response to human sin has always been to provide a solution, and with patient longsuffering, call us back to Himself. Only after people reject God’s grace and mercy over long periods of time do they ever find themselves facing His reluctant wrath.

God is not indifferent to evil in the world. He cares about ethnic violence, political repression, religious persecution, abuse of children and all kinds of exploitation. He suffers with all of His creation and His people. No one gets away with anything in terms of eternity but everyone has many chances to respond to God’s grace. Don’t misunderstand God’s patience. He may not intervene immediately to punish every oppressor and to rescue every sufferer. But He cares. He hates the sin, loves the sinner, and suffers with the oppressed. He is neither a bully nor a wimp. He will make all things right in the end. He delays judgment until all who will come, do come into the salvation of the Lord and He gives us more and more opportunities to bring His freeing salvation to those we meet.

Peter then verifies the writings of the Apostle Paul as authentic Scriptures and states the obvious, but they can be hard to understand. Peter again refers to the writings of Paul, they are almost all of the Epistles or Letters in the New Testament, whether to churches, individuals, or groups of people. He states something that should have significance for us as well, Peter says that he and Paul have said the same things about the end-times and the protection of God.

He goes on to say that some of the false teachers, remember Peter had taught the readers that God would protect them from false teachers by removing the false teachers, have relied on the complicated

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writings of Paul to prove their new and conflicting doctrines and states that God would eliminate them as well. False teachers are false teachers no matter where they teach, university, church or even just the businesses of the world, and they will be handled by God and removed to protect those who are walking in the reality that Jesus as Lord and Savior is the only truth that will save anyone.

Stay firm in the Lord. Remember that anytime someone follows the teachings of false teachers and let's their false truth become the god of their life, they have changed sides and now are an angel of the devil. Their fate will be like his. Peter ends the letter with a statement of the same instruction with which he began, **II Peter 1:2-11**; pursue Christian maturity and a deepening knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ and that will keep you safe in the Lord and headed for an eternity with Him. God's true protection is that He intends to keep everyone of us out of Hell, or Gehenna. We were not created for such a place and God has no desire for us to be there.

We have looked at many areas of God's protection that people do not link with protection; but Peter says they are the very things that will preserve you in times of trouble.

God's Protections

1. Protection of belonging to God
2. Protection of God's continual confirmation of His people
3. Protection of prophecy, God does not vary
4. Protection against false teachers, scoffers, and deceivers
5. Protection of God's judgment, for the sinful and rewards for His people
6. Protection of God's patience, not wanting any to perish
7. Protection of His peace to take us from this life to the next

I am told by those who have become pilots that your perception of the earth is quite different once you are a pilot. You can see farther than you ever could on the ground. Pilots call this elevated and enhanced perspective a "bird's eye view" or "God's Eye View". Jesus is filled with anticipation for the time He can bring each of His followers to be with Him, He only needs the signal of His Father that now is the time. He simply longs to be united with those who are His forevermore. His protection of you until that time is the best that can be provided. I hope that you rest in the peace of this great Bible truth.