

PART 4



**Theme: REMEMBER THE GOSPEL!**

2nd Peter represents the Apostle Peter's 2<sup>nd</sup> epistle. Written shortly after the first, the distinguishing mark of this letter is not only its focus on the gospel, but its efficient and effective presentation. In this respect, Peter does two things. First, he reminds us of what the (true) gospel teaches (1:1-15), then he provides us with those reasons we should not only remember what this gospel teaches, but also why it is important that we are growing strong in our commitment to its truths (1:16-3:18).

**1. What Peter reminds us is the true/saving gospel message (1:1-15):**

Through faith in the righteousness of Christ we GAIN a justified and glorified/exalted state (or "standing") with God. That being said, we MUST MAINTAIN this state/standing through faithfulness. Such maintaining should not surprise us given the reason God justified/glorified us, as well as the commitment we made in order to gain that justification. Faithful maintaining (then) looks like growing in those areas/attributes of obedience God commands in His Word. Failing to maintain will mean losing what we gained; faithfulness (on the other hand) will mean that our justified/glorified standing before God and w/Christ remains intact along with the salvation it promises. IOW: Faith + Faithfulness = Salvation NOT Faith + Nothing = Salvation (1:1-11).

**(1:8) "For if these qualities are yours and increasing [i.e. you are maintaining what you gained] they keep you from being ineffective and unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ"** = We must maintain the justified/glorified state we gained by faith (i.e. "in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ"; See 2:20) otherwise it will become "ineffective/unfruitful" (Jam 2:14-26). This can be seen by considering also that it is such knowledge/faith that results in justification and glorification (See 1:2-3 = "grace and peace" [in reference to our justification - 1Pe 1:2; Joh 1:16-17; Act 15:11; Rom 3:24, 5:15-21, 6:1, 14-15; 1Co 1:3-4; Gal 1:3-6, 5:4; Eph 1:7; 2Th 3:18; 2Ti 1:9, 2:1, 4:22; Heb 13:9-15; Jud 1:4-5; Rev 1:4-5] and "all things pertaining to life and godliness" [in reference to our glorification = Rom 6:4; 2Co 3:17-18]). Salvation is therefore faith + faithfulness.

Peter thought it was incredibly important to remind believers about this aspect of the true/saving gospel message (i.e. that we must maintain what we have gained if we hope to be remain justified and be saved) (1:12-15).

**2. Why Peter thought it was so important to not only remind believers of this gospel (of G&M) but see that they were growing strong in their commitment to its truths (1:16-3:18):**

2.1. B/C the gospel (of G&M) is not the invention of men, but the message of both Christ (whom God Himself affirmed) and the OT Scriptures (1:16-21).

2.2. B/C false teachers wb in the Christian camp denying the gospel (of G&M) and leading many astray by appealing to feelings rather than the facts (i.e. sound doctrine) (2:1-2a; consider *Against Empathy* by Paul Bloom = Yale researcher reveals empathy [feeling through others experiences] to be one of the leading motivators of inequality and immorality due to this capricious and irrational emotion's power to skew the facts. This BTW is Hollywood and the Evangelical churches' number one weapon of indoctrination).

2.3. B/C this heretical "gain but no maintain" group will condemn the true gospel (of G&M) and its followers (i.e. true Christians) as though they were on their way to Hell when in reality it wb the other way around (2:2b-19a).

**(2b-3) "because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed."** = The success of the false teachers' feelings (versus facts), approach and gospel heresy of gain BUT no maintain, will cause the true gospel (of G&M) to be viewed as the wrong one. As a result, a tragic turning of the tables will occur. The only gospel that can save (again, the true gospel of G&M) wb cursed/condemned as false (and therefore damning) whereas the heresy (of G& NO M) wb touted as the truth (2Ti 4:3). Such condemnation (however) will not be reserved for the true gospel alone. According to Peter, they will be successful in condemning true Christians as well. **(10b) "bold and willful, they do not tremble as they blaspheme the glorious ones"** = True Christians – those committed to maintain their justified state through righteous practice/ living (2Co 8:23). These will likewise become a target of the heretical (G & NO M) group's bold and blasphemous campaign. As a result, we (too) will be viewed as false and suffer harsh ridicule (2Ti 3:12). That the term "glorious ones" does indeed refer to human beings – most specifically, those who believe faithful/righteous living is necessary (to maintain) as part of the true gospel message is irrefutable once one considers: 1) who Peter distinguishes them from **((11) "whereas angels, though greater in might and power [than these beings] , do not pronounce a blasphemous judgment against them [the glorious ones] before the Lord"** = moral beings other than/weaker than angels – humans!); 2) who Peter offers up as his examples (of "glorious ones") in the previous verses **((5) "Noah, the herald of righteousness", (7) "righteous Lot greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked (8) for as that righteous man lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds"** = Practical righteousness (i.e. righteous, faithful obedient living) is clearly what is being referred to in re: to Noah and Lot given what it stands in contrast to ("sensual conduct", "lawless deeds"). This (then) is why Peter calls such individuals, "the glorious ones" – b/c of their commitment to practicing righteousness.

That such righteous/obedient practice is being viewed as necessary (i.e. you MUST maintain what you gain) and the differing factor between the true gospel and that which is false is also made clear by the differing eternal outcomes communicated by Peter in relation to those practicing righteousness/obedience (vs. those who don't)(4-10) = Like the fallen angels or the wicked people of Noah and Lot's day (the "ancient world" of "long ago"), Peter assures us that the false gospel teachers and their followers in our day (i.e. all those who reject righteous living as necessary to maintain our standing/state before God) are equally in for a big, damning surprise ("their destruction is not asleep", they are kept "under punishment until the day of judgment."; also 2:12-13 - "they...will also be destroyed in their destruction, suffering wrong for their wrongdoing, 2:17 - "For them the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved"), whereas those who do practice righteousness as necessary, w/b saved ("the Lord know to rescue the godly from trials"). What (then) to remember is not only what they do (i.e. condemn the true gospel and us - God's "glorious ones") but where they are headed. Holding to a false gospel will not be something God overlooks on judgment day. Whatever love for/commitment to Christ they think they possessed during their earthly existence will be viewed by Jesus as rebellion in light of their refusal to obey His Law as necessary to preserving the covenant relationship. IOW: their faith alone in Christ alone (peppered w/selective obedience when and where it suits them but only as optional) will leave them alone in their faith w/o Christ in the pit of Hell (Mat 5:19, 7:21-27).

2.4. B/C the additional tools of entrapment used by the (G & NO M) teachers means we have our work cut out for us in reaching others w/the true gospel message (of G&M).

Besides their appeal to feelings rather than fact, Peter provides 3 additional reasons the false teachers' approach and message is so appealing: 1) They are anarchists at heart (10-11) = The idea of despising authority mentioned (here) goes beyond simply being anti-LBS in their gospel (2:1). These individuals hate the concept of authority/rule itself. As such, they champion the phrase, "Christian liberty" or "human rights" while rejecting, condemning or treating as suspect anything (or one) that attempts to establish rules/laws for others, or speaks in terms of moral obligation and obedience in relation to others, or expects the submission of others to its design and demands (Consider again verse 11. The reason angels do not blaspheme true believers is bc they respect God's authority structure which places us above them - 1Co 6:3; see also Jud 1:5-11 = A rejection of authority in person [Moses w/"Egypt", "the devil" and "Korah"], position ["Angels"] or precept [Sodom and "Gomorrhah", "Balaam", "Cain"] is the common denominator in every example. What this anarchy looks like today brings to mind the secretive or subtle nature spoken of by Peter in verse 1 [e.g. the Evangelical view on the Law = It is good for God but not for us, It can only condemn never bring life, etc. Even in the way the Evangelical church understands the Christian's obedience undermines God's authority. It is now the result of internal, personal desire rather than external demand. IOW: We obeyed only bc it is what we wanted to do, not bc we recognize and submit to God's authority over us). As stated in the previous point, such anarchist leanings play perfectly to our sinful nature (1Jo 3:4 = all sin is anarchy). Anarchy was the basis also for the Fall (Gen 3:5). 2) Their incredible confidence is incredibly convincing irrespective of their incredible ignorance (10b-13) = Deliberate boldness, lack of fear and no shame/concern for what others think should never be among the reasons a person is viewed as leadership material when such behavior is accompanied by gross stupidity or self-delusion as it is w/those holding to a false gospel (i.e. they are "bold and willful", "do not "tremble" and "revel in the daytime" as those not ashamed of what they teach, yet have more in common w/ "irrational animals"; they are "ignorant", "blots and blemishes"). This kind of braggadocio (however) is oftentimes what attracts others to follow such people. We are naturally drawn to believe those who come across so confident - irrespective of their intellect or correctness (This is a part of the phenomenon known as Confirmation Bias: we tend to confirm as true those things held confidently by others - especially those who represent the majority - which is always the case w/the FG camp - Mat 7:13-14). Scripture itself affirms confidence as a powerful tool in convincing others of one's message (Ecc 10:4). 3) They sell cheap, shiny, plastic junk (3a) "And in their greed they will exploit [ἐμπορεύονται = engage in business w/; Jam 4:13] you with false [πλαστοίς = plastic; fake made to look real] words" = In relation to material things, there has always been a bigger market for what is fabricated (or plastic) than for the real thing (e.g. plastic wood on furniture versus real wood). That b/c plastic is cheaper (and) oftentimes shinier (and people like shiny!). IOW: it is easy to acquire and instantly appeals to our senses ("look how shiny it is!"). In the spiritual realm, things are no different. The demand for a gospel (or salvation) that is easy (or requires nothing) yet makes all kinds of shiny promises has always been (and will always be) much larger than a gospel whose promises are dependent on the commitment of its recipients. This (too) then is advantage shared by those peddling the false gospel (of G & NO M). Though not the real thing (but instead cheap, shiny, plastic junk), it sells. This idea - along w/the false teachers' greed-motivated manipulation, is picked up and expanded on in (14-19) = Like "Balaam" the false prophet, the false teachers in the church are more businessmen than pastors. As such, what determines their message is what sells. They are also like the false prophet in that they love "gain from wrongdoing". Put together, this means taking advantage of those weak in mind and body ("They entice unsteady souls", "They entice by sensual passions of the flesh those who are barely escaping from those who live in error") through the sale of what is cheap in grace (i.e. a message "full of adultery insatiable for sin" = spiritual adultery will no longer cost you your covenant relationship w/Jesus; being done in our practice of sin is not necessary; you can continue unrepentant/["insatiable"] in a particular sin and still get to heaven. E.G. "No sin can separate us from Christ. even if we were to kill or commit adultery a thousand times each day" - Martin Luther; "Our sins never cancel out our salvation because we live in grace" - John MacArthur) and shiny in its promises (i.e. the promise of fun ["loud boasts of folly"], and "freedom" [from obedience/obligation to the Law and righteousness]; E.G. "In Christ, we are carried directly to heaven, no work necessary on our part. Only when you realize that the gospel has nothing to do with your obedience but with Christ's obedience for you, will you start to obey. The only Christians who end up getting better are those who realize that if they don't get better, God will love them anyway. The only 'if' the Gospel knows is this: 'if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.' (1 John 2:1) The gospel liberates us to be okay with not being okay. We know we're not—though we try very hard to convince other people we are. But the gospel tells us, "Relax, it is finished. Christians can uncouple performance from identity. After all, don't we live our lives under a banner that reads "It is finished"? Wasn't that Jesus's final pronouncement from the cross? Thankfully for Peter (and for us), when Peter calls out for a Savior, Jesus springs into action. Matthew says that, "Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him" (v. 31 NRSV). There is no hesitation. No requirement. Just salvation. Sanctification is the daily hard work of going back to the reality of our justification." - Tullian Tchividjian, [It is Finished: 365 of Good News; Jesus + Nothing = Everything; One Way Love: Inexhaustible Grace for an Exhausted World]). It is (however) plastic junk. IOW: their gospel and its promise is a fabrication (of their imagination) whose promises will fail (i.e. they are "waterless springs and mists driven by a storm"; "they promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption"). The important thing not to forget in Peter's lengthy description of these individuals (and additional reasons for success) is his intention in communicating it. That we would not only realize what we are up against, but that such knowledge would motivate us to work even harder to know and grow in confidence, boldness and clarity in the only thing that can penetrate and push back the damning darkness they have created: the true gospel of G&M (3:17-18; This Paul says is our secret weapon - 2Co 10:3-5).