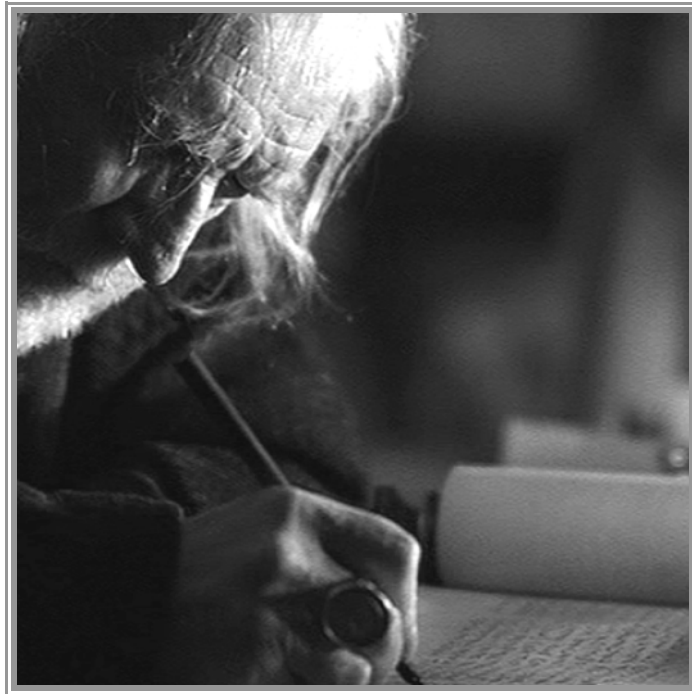


THE WRITINGS OF PETER



STUDY 3

2 PETER 3

Sunday Morning Bible Study

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Introduction – Last time we talked about a **second lifeline** that Christians must **HOLD FAST** to when weathering the storms of **false teaching**. The second lifeline Peter instructs his readers to grab onto is ***the evidences for our faith***. The writings that Christians base their faith on were recorded by the eyewitnesses who saw and heard the Messiah. In addition, the Scriptures did not originate with the writers themselves but from the Godhead through the Person of the Holy Spirit.

2 Peter 1:16

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

Christians base their faith on what the people who saw and heard the Messiah witnessed first hand; bearing in mind that these Christians were willing to be tortured and die rather than to not tell the truth about what they had experienced with Jesus.

2 Peter 1:21

For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

2 Timothy 3:16

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

John 14:26

But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

Luke 12:11-12

And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say: 12 For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.

Because the Holy Spirit is the originator of the writings of the Bible, Christians can have confidence in the reliability of Scripture above any other written work or teaching that exists.

Despite how strong the evidence is for the reliability of the Bible, the Bible records in many places that false prophets and false teachers will exist in our lifetime.

Some of the primary ways false teachers can be identified are:

- Their teachings and actions are based on emotion and almost animal instinct and not on truth
- Their teachings are usually destructive to a Christian's faith
- They deny that Jesus is God by making Him lower than God or by elevating other beings to a similar level (i.e. "super angels" and Mary the mother of Jesus)
- The appeal to follow false teaching is many times based on a de-emphasis of morality while promising material prosperity

For today's study, we will look at **2 Peter 3** and grab onto the **third lifeline** that Peter recommends we **HOLD FAST** to:

The future that God promises.

2 Peter 3:1-7 The Ungodly Will Be Judged in the Future That God Promises

This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: 2 That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour: 3 Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, 4 And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. 5 For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: 6 Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: 7 But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

Group Questions

- **Verses 1-2** – What does Peter want his readers to remember? The words of the prophets and apostles.
- **Verses 1-2** – Why does Peter want Christians to remember the words of the prophets and the apostles? Because the Word of these men came from God Himself and God's Word must be what we hold onto when our beliefs are under fire in the last days.
- **Verses 3-4** – What is one of the things that unbelievers in the last days will ridicule Christians about? That Christ has not returned.
- **Verse 5** – What do these unbelieving mockers CHOOSE not to pay attention to? They ignore the historical accuracy of the Biblical record and precise fulfillment of prophecy.
- **Verses 5-7** – What does creation's past, present and future rely on? God's Word. God's Word, whether spoken or written, can always be relied on; God has never broken His Word.

2 Peter 3:8-10 The Lord Returns in the Future That God Promises

But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

Group Questions

- **Verse 8** – Why does Peter make a statement about how God views time compared to our understanding of time? So that we do not lose faith because of our expectation of a timetable is not met.
- **Verse 9** – Who always keeps His promises? God.
- **Verse 10** – What is meant by the phrase, *“the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night”*? It will be sudden and unexpected.

2 Peter 3:11-18 We Must Live Today Mindful Future That God Promises

Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation [*behavior*] and godliness, 12 Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? 13 Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. 14 Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless. 15 And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; 16 As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. 17 Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. 18 But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

Group Question

- **Verse 11-12** – Based on the future that God promises, what should we put our efforts into? We should apply the majority of our efforts to things that won't be destroyed during the "great meltdown": *relationships*. Our relationship with Jesus Christ; our relationships with other Christians; helping others into relationship with Christ; and helping those already in relationship with Christ to get even closer to Him.
- **Verses 13-15** – Should this terrifying information about the future cause us to be fearful? No. Peter says we can have peace remembering our salvation in our Lord.
- **Verses 15-16** – Will we always understand everything in Scripture? No. *Compare this verse from Deuteronomy 29:29* The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.
- **Verses 16-17** – What is the result of allowing things we don't understand in Scripture to cause our faith to be shaken? We could fall away from following Jesus just as if we'd been deceived by false teaching.
- **Verse 18** – If "grow **in** grace" is understood as "grow **by means of** grace", what does grace have to do with the growth of our relationship with Christ? The means by which we grow spiritually is based on the unearned favor He shows us and is not contingent upon how well we perform. No matter how we are doing in our growth in Christ, we can always choose to improve the quality of our relationship with Him and He will supply that which is necessary to develop closeness with Him.

HOLD FAST

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1. Remembering the historical accuracy of the Biblical record and precise fulfillment of prophecy strengthens believers to be able to **withstand** attacks on their faith.
2. Believers who remember the future that God promises can take **comfort** in the fact that justice will be served to those who mislead us in our beliefs or mocked us for our beliefs.
3. God spoke everything that is into existence; the past present and future are kept by His word; and God **always** keeps His word.
4. Because nothing material will last for eternity, Christians should put their efforts into building what will last for eternity: **relationships**.
5. Christians must not allow Scripture that they do not understand to disrupt their faith to the point of falling out of **fellowship** with Christ.

HOLD FAST to the lifelines when your faith is under attack!

Lifeline Number 1

HOLD FAST to a *growing* relationship with Jesus Christ; *growing* involves frequent time spent together building trust.

Lifeline Number 2

HOLD FAST to the evidence of our faith from the eyewitnesses who recorded things as the Holy Spirit led them to.

Lifeline Number 3

HOLD FAST to the future that God promises; because God ALWAYS keeps His Word.