

**PREPARATION FOR LESSON:** Read the book of 2 Peter

## BACKGROUND

Peter had previously written Jewish believers in northern Asia Minor about suffering from government and society. But in the last 3 years, a new problem has arisen. False teachers have come into the local churches in Rome. Peter sees their character and what they are teaching. He also sees many Jewish believers accepting this false teaching. They are attacking church members who refuse to accept it. Peter knows these false teachers will move eastward to all the communities of Jewish believers. In 68 AD, Peter is taken prisoner, put in a dungeon and condemned to death. Because he is not a Roman citizen, he will be crucified. So just before his death, he sends a letter to warn Jewish believers in Asia Minor.

**THEME** Suffering of Jewish believers: suffering from inside sources - the local church family

## OUTLINE Suffering for Being True to the Faith

- What they as believers will need 1
- What the false teachers will be like 2
- What the scoffers will say 3

## DEFINITIONS

**Knowledge:**

**Gnosis:** general knowledge about moral or spiritual issues that comes thru experience.

This knowledge is necessary because the more facts one has, the more the facts can fit together.

**Epignosis:** accurate, deeper knowledge that comes with spiritual maturity (about moral and spiritual issues).

**Faith:** not just to accept Jesus' payment, but faith to live the Christian life.

God gives everyone "x" amount of faith. If we do not use it, He does not give us more. If we use the faith He gave us in the beginning, it will provide God with opportunity to give us more faith. That faith will include the qualities of:

**Virtue/goodness:** courage to defend the faith and fight against the wrong. When we use that, He will give us...

**Insight** to know when to speak up, be silent or leave. When we use that, He will give us...

**Self control:** can be silent or resist with tempers calm or leave without bitterness.

**Endurance** to keep going no matter what other people do or say.

**Dependence on God:** awareness of how much we need Him to survive (*godliness, piety*).

**Caring, empathy** for other believers.

**Doing what is right** regardless of feelings; *love* that comes from the will; *love* that can be commanded.

## DEVELOPED OUTLINE

**Chpt. 1 What they as believers will need** to prepare for the false teachers.

- To remember the facts about Jesus - He is Deity (God), Savior and for the Jews, their Messiah (Christ). 1:1
- To have accurate, deeper knowledge about God the Father and Jesus. 1:2

This will give them increased peace and grace.

It will give them an awareness of God's power and God's promises.

- To use their faith and let God keep adding the qualities they need for spiritual maturity (fruit of the Spirit).

Without these qualities, these Jewish believers will be ungrateful of Jesus' payment in the past, blind to truth about Him in the present and uncaring about His return in the future.

With these qualities, they will not fail in their beliefs or stumble in their morals 1:9-10.

They are to get their accurate knowledge about Jesus from the Old and New Testament books 1:16-21.

**Chpt. 2 What the false teachers will be like**

They will become part of the local church. They will say the right words and act the right way. Because of their charisma and capability, they will be given leadership and authority. Once in power they will cleverly change the message about Jesus and introduce heresies.

#### Chpt. 2 What the false teachers will be like (continued)

- They will try to change beliefs about Jesus - His deity, authority, salvation 2:1  
about the Christian life - immorality and greed are okay 2:2
- They will:  
despise God's authority 2:10; be immoral, seduce the unstable and be greedy 2:14; be like springs without water, leaving people who are seeking God, disillusioned and spiritually thirsty 2:17; appear to be believers for a while, but because they are pretenders, they will return to the life of the sinful nature. 2:20-22.
- They will be judged by God - just as He judged the angels, pre-flood people, and Sodom and Gomorrah 2:4-6  
They were judged for immorality out of control. Before God judged them, He protected His people that lived among them (Noah and Lot). So now, before God judges the false teachers, He will protect His own people.

#### Chpt. 3 What the scoffers will say - They will ridicule the belief in Jesus' return 3:3-4

- Peter gives them facts about Jesus' return 3:8-9  
It is true that from a human perspective, God has been promising the Jews a kingdom for a long time. But from God's perspective, it is only a short time. Jesus keeps His promises; He makes salvation available to all and does not want any to be separated from Him. He has been patient to give people time and opportunity to understand the issues and make their choice about Him.
- Peter tells them to focus on holiness and peace in their lives as they wait for God's program to be accomplished.
- Paul's letters are Scripture and they validate what Peter has said 3:16.
- Peter's final instruction - those who want to follow what God has said will suffer persecution from those within local churches. Only those who are spiritually mature will be able to get thru it. They need to prepare by growing in understanding how to experience God's grace and growing in their knowledge about Jesus.

**APPLICATION:** Churches and leaders are changing the basics of the Christian faith in our day.

#### Changing (wrong) beliefs about:

**God:** God is in everything, therefore, everything is God; there is a divine spark in us which means we are all gods.

**Jesus:** People are denying: Jesus' deity or refusing to say Jesus is the Son of God.

Jesus' death on the cross was not a payment - only an example.

Jesus is not returning for the Church. He is not returning to set up a Kingdom.

That is the responsibility of the Church.

**Scripture / salvation:** Scripture is not accurate; it is not our authority; we are not able to know what it means.

There are many ways to be right with God. God loves and will accept everyone. No one will be separated from God.

**Christian life:** There are no absolutes of right or wrong. All relationships are good if people are committed. There is good in all religions. Love and tolerance are more important than belief. Experiences are more important than facts.

People can follow Christ but stay in their old religion to avoid persecution. (Missions have created a new term for these people - *Christ-followers*. They are not called *believers* because they do not believe exclusively in Jesus. They only *follow* Christ along with their other deities).

#### Answers

We cannot stop all wrong teaching from entering into the local church. But we can be on our guard. We can develop our knowledge to recognize error. Using our faith to develop spiritual maturity, we can become firm in our beliefs of the Christian faith. When a local church goes into error, we can pray that God will use someone to rescue it and bring it back to Scripture.

If there are sufficient members in the congregation that want that, God will answer their prayers.

Then leaders need to be trained in the basic doctrines of Scripture.

Church members need to be trained for spiritual maturity and the development of spiritual gifts.

Not all churches can be brought back to Scripture. If nothing can be done, those who remain true to God's Word will have to leave. There will be suffering and heartache. Some leaders, church members and even family will turn on them.

Our strength will come from Peter's instruction 3:18

*Keep on growing in your ability to accept and experience God's grace.*

*Keep on growing in the knowledge of Jesus* - who He is - what He is like - what He has done

- what He has promised - what **He** can do.

