

I will not be Negligent to Remind You—Part Two

Cornerstone Christian Fellowship

Sunday, August 10, 2014

II Peter 3:1 Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), 2 that you 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 Savior, 3 knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, 4 and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming?...”

...8 But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance...

...14 Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless; 15 and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation – as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, 16 as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures. 17 You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; 18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.

Last week we began looking at how Peter was so very desirous to remind his readers of certain things concerning their walk of faith. He was moved to set this reminder before them as a result of an event which took place in his life some 30 years prior to his writing his second and last epistle. Of course we will remember that the event was the moment that Jesus took three of His disciples up to a high mountain and was transfigured before them in His kingdom glory. These three disciples had the privilege of being transported forward in time to the 7th Day ó the 7th thousandth year of man. They literally witnessed Jesus in His kingdom. While there is much to learn from the passages in Scripture which deal with this single event, that is not our focus in these lessons; rather the thing that we want to notice is what Peter writes *because* of the surety of the future coming kingdom. We ðl remember that this event had so impacted Peter that as a result of seeing what he saw, he wrote his last epistle by way of reminder even though the people to whom he wrote were already well established in these things. He wanted the recipients of this letter to *remember* specific things even after he was dead and gone. And so here we are today ó recipients of his letter ó being reminded of the very things we already know, l-o-n-g after Peter is dead and gone. This is an obvious work of the Holy Spirit, isn't it?

And along with this reminder, Peter *reminds us* **not to forget** something: **8 But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.** Now the way in which the Holy Spirit inspired Peter to write v. 8 (through the

use of the Greek language) reveals that the recipients of his letter *had been forgetting these things* and He wanted them to stop forgetting *í* that with the Lord a day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years is as a day. There are some people who would attribute the idea of *a thousand years being as a day* as a simple statement to show that with God time is nothing *ó* time is short, time is long, it $\text{\textcircled{a}}$ all the same to God. Of course, we know better, as we have been established in the fact that v. 8 specifically has its foundation in those first 34 verses of the Bible, for the purpose of establishing 6 days of man (6,000 years) and the 7th day the Day of the Lord, at which time God has promised to send His Son back in order to receive His kingdom, and set up the Day of the Lord, the 7th thousandth-year Day.

Contextually we can see that in relationship to the promise of Christ $\text{\textcircled{a}}$ return, Peter speaks of the *longsuffering* of the Lord: **9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.** And *í* **14 Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things** [referring to both the Day of the Lord *ó* the Coming Age, and the Day of God *ó* the Ages of Ages], **be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless; 15 and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation...** Because of the things that we already have been established in concerning the Coming Age and the Eternal Ages to follow, we are to *diligent to be found by Christ in peace, without spot and blameless*. Here again *ó* just as we saw last week the need to *diligently* add specific characteristics to our faith *ó* so we are also to be ***diligent*** to be found in peace, without spot and blameless. We $\text{\textcircled{d}}$ get to what it means to be found in peace without spot, and blameless in a moment, but first let $\text{\textcircled{a}}$ contemplate the phrase *ó* *õ*the longsuffering of the Lord $\text{\textcircled{o}}$. The fact is that the Lord is *not slack* (He is not slow) about fulfilling the Promise of His coming, *but is longsuffering* towards *us*. He is not willing that any of *us* should perish, but that all of *us* should come to repentance. And then we see more added to this idea in v. 14 *ó* we are to *õ*consider that ***the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation*** $\text{\textcircled{o}}$.

One might think that to be longsuffering means to be *õ*suffering long $\text{\textcircled{o}}$ I looked up the word *longsuffering* and found that it is translated from a compound Greek word *makrothumia*. *Makro* means *long*; and *thumia* (thumos) means *temper*, though interestingly, *thumos* is never translated *temper*. More often than not the word *thumia* (thumos) is translated *wrath*. Therefore, this compound word *makrothumia* carries with it the idea of one *withholding wrath for a long period of time*.

There is one passage in Romans where the word *thumos* is translated *indignation*, but it is used in conjunction with another word that is translated *wrath*, thus revealing *God's indignation* (thumos) *and wrath* (orge). In this passage, the Holy Spirit reveals that God $\text{\textcircled{a}}$ wrath is being withheld only for a time (due to His present longsuffering), at the end of which God $\text{\textcircled{a}}$ indignation and wrath will be brought forth. In speaking to/about Christians, Paul says: **Romans 2:5 But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart** [speaking to individual Christians within the Church at Rome] **you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, 6 who “will render to each one according to his deeds”:** **7 eternal life** [Lit., *age-lasting life*] **to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; 8 but to those who are**

self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation [thumos] and wrath [orge], 9 tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; 10 but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 11 For there is no partiality with God. (This passage appears somewhat word-y, but we will break it down now!)

The reason for relating what Paul says in this passage in Romans to what we are being reminded of in II Peter is to show that even though we are presently experiencing the ðlongsuffering of the Lord,ö there is coming a time when His longsuffering will cease, and His judgment will ensue. This passage in Romans tells us *when* that time will be: it will be in *the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God* (v. 5), Who will (at that time) ðrender to each one according to his deeds.ö (Of course, we are speaking here of the JSOC.) Notice the translators of the NKJV put v. 6 in quotations, revealing that he was quoting from the OT. I looked in the Scriptures to see from where v. 6 was being quoted. The fact that *God will render to everyone according to his deeds* is explicitly mentioned no less than *five* times in the OT (Job 34:11; Ps. 62:12; Prov. 24:12; Jer. 17:10; 32:19), and explicitly reiterated *seven* times in the NT (Mt. 16:27; Ro. 14:12; I Cor. 3:8; II Cor. 5:10; Rev. 2:23; 20:12; 22:12), for a total of 12 times in the Scriptures. While those are the places wherein God *explicitly* states the fact that He will render to everyone according to his deeds, if one would take the time to comb through all the Scriptures, he would find 100s of places wherein God implicitly states the same idea ó judgment will be rendered according to one's individual deeds.

And then notice there in our passage in Romans the *two outcomes* of this rendering according to an individual's deeds: 1) age-lasting life (v.7) accompanied by glory, honor and peace (v.10), or 2) indignation and wrath (v. 8) accompanied by tribulation and anguish (v. 9)! Either of these two outcomes will be experienced by Christians during the whole of the Coming Age ó the whole of the 1,000-year Day of the Lord. And then let's further notice what type of deeds the individuals did, which resulted in either outcome:

- To the one who receives *age-lasting life*, they were rendered thus because of their *patient continuance in doing good* as they actively sought (in the present age) *for glory, honor, and immortality* (in the age to come). Their focus in this present age was persistently on the age to come. This *patient continuance* is the Greek word *hupomone*, a characteristic which we saw last week in the string of seven characteristics we are to diligently add to our faith: **II Peter 1:6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance** [*hupomone*], **to perseverance godliness...** The final outcome of continually adding those seven characteristics to one's faith, we'll remember, was an abundant entrance in the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, having shown oneself to be neither barren nor unfruitful. It is imperative to note that what one does in this present age has a direct and very distinct bearing on their existence in the Coming Age. What you and I focus on here and now, what we spend our time doing here and now will directly affect our outcome there and then! If you and I exercise *patient continuance* (patient endurance) *in doing good* now; if you and I actively *seek* now *for glory, honor and immortality* to be ours in the Coming Age, then we will receive it! We can know that with certainty! But if that

activity is not ours in the present, then we can know with the very same certainty, that we will have the opposite outcome in the future.

- To the one who is rendered indignation (thumos) *and wrath*, they had been *self-seeking and did not obey the truth, but obeyed unrighteousness* (in the present age) with no thought of the age to come. Their focus in this present age was persistently on the present age with not a thought on the coming age, and therefore, they bore no fruit for the Coming Age ó they will be barren. But that doesn't imply that they will get nothing in the Coming Age. ðNothingö is never a just recompense when it comes to God's righteous judgment! They will get something; and Scripture is quite clear as to what they will get! They will receive God's indignation and wrath, and along with that, tribulation and anguish in the age to come. And that will be theirs for the whole of the 1,000 years, not just for part of it. Think of that for a moment!

It is interesting to note that both uses of the word *obey* in v. 8 (they *do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness*) is translated from a Greek word that has to do with *believing*. So on the one hand, they *did not believe the truth*, and on the other hand, they *believed unrighteousness*; and as a result of *the way they believed*, they were judged by God as *having been disobedient*. This brings to bear the whole concept that individuals will *act according to what they believe*, which is why it is so important to get our beliefs (and therefore our focus) correct! If a Christian does what appears to be doing a ðgood deedö, but it is done apart from *the faith*, then it is **not** seen by God as a ðgood deedö. In order for a work to be considered by God a ðgood workö (which would be found to be as *gold, silver and precious gems* at the JSOC), it has to be a work done in *the faith*. Hence, if a person does not believe about things concerning the JSOC and things beyond, their ðgood deedsö will be considered as wood, hay, and straw, and will be burned up.) These are not my words! I am just saying what God says.

One comforting thing for us to realize is that right now during the time when God is long-suffering toward us, part and parcel with the longsuffering of the Lord is I John 1:9. In His longsuffering, He is waiting patiently for us to confess our sins, so that He can cleanse us from all unrighteousness, because He wants us to experience the salvation of our souls!

So, contextually in II Peter 3: 9, 14, it becomes very obvious that the *longsuffering* of God would be referring to this present time, when God is presently extending patient endurance towards us, rather than His wrath, as He is not willing that any *of us should perish* during the whole of the Coming Age through experiencing His indignation and wrath. Instead His desire is for all *of us* to come to repentance in the present age, so that we can experience life in the Coming Age. Therefore, for the present time, God is longsuffering!

It is here that we are to understand that *the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation*. The salvation referred to here is age-lasting life in the Coming Age; it is the salvation of the soul and the redemption of the body. (Next week we will call to our remembrance what the salvation of the soul and the redemption of the body will ðlook likeö.) God's longsuffering is now; His mercies being new every morning is now; He is our High Priest now; He offers us cleansing from sin now! But there is coming a Day when He will lay aside His office of High Priest, and will don

the appearance as that which the Apostle John witnessed another time when he was taken forward in time and space. John wrote in **Revelation 1:3 and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. 14 His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; 15 His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; 16 He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength.** This is a description of Jesus as our Judge at the JSOC. It is here where individual judgments and determinations will be meted out to every Christian (even to you and to me), revealing our destiny for the whole of the Coming Age ó either *life* in the age to come, or *indignation and wrath* in the age to come ó according to what each of us has done, and Jesus will mete out this judgment without partiality. There will be a separation made here; a separation among Christians ó the separation between the *called* and the *called-out!*

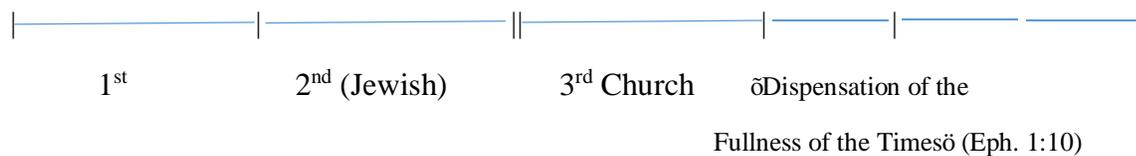
And even within the very context of Peter reminding us of the things that the Holy Spirit is prompting him to write in both of his epistles, he tells us *when* the longsuffering of the Lord will come to an end. And this revelation of timing comes in the form of a warning. (Even in this we can see the longsuffering of the Lord.) Peter warns his readers to stop forgetting that a day with the Lord is as a thousand years and a thousand years as a day. Peter wrote his epistles at the *beginning* of final 2 days of the allotted 6 days for Man:



There are 6 days allotted for Man (the present age), followed by the Day of the Lord (the Coming Age), followed by the Day of God (the Ages of the Ages):



There are FOUR divisions within the scope of the 7,000 years. These divisions are called ðdispensationsö:



Each dispensation during Man's Day lasts for 2 days (2,000 year-days), making up 3 dispensations. The ðdispensation of the fullness of the timesö is during the Day of the Lord (Eph. 1:10). But here is what I would like to call your attention to: We are **HERE** at the *end* of the final 2 days of our dispensation, just prior to the 7th day ensuing; **HERE** at the *very end* of the 6th day ó the *final* day allotted for Man. We stand on the very precipice of the 7th Day. In these ðlast days (the 5th and 6th days)ö we can look back and see that scoffers *have* come saying,

“Where is the promise of His coming?” And the thing that they *willfully forget* in asking this question, is the whole foundation laid out in the first thirty-four verses of Scripture: The six days of restoration (after the desecration of Lucifer’s rebellion), and the 7th day of rest. Many of us have been witnesses of these scoffers, haven’t we? Some of us have had personal experience with people who scoff at the whole concept of the 6 days, 6,000 years, and the 7th day, the coming Day of Rest that is yet for the people of God.

Let’s read again what Peter specifically says about those who scoff: **II Peter 3:3 knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days** [the last two days of the six days allotted to man], **walking according to 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 creation.” 5 For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, 6 by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water.** We have already been established in what this all means. We know that the phrases *the heavens were of old* and *the world that then existed* in vv. 5 and 6 refer to that which God created in the beginning in Genesis 1:1. But Peter clearly states that something happened to *the world that then existed*! It perished, being flooded with water! We have already been established in the fact that Peter is referring to **Genesis 1:2 The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep** [Lit., *raging waters*]. **And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.** And if anyone would wonder at the lack of information here in II Peter, it would be because Peter is writing these things to people who had already been established in them! Peter is simply reminding them of things they already knew, so there would be no need for a complex explanation here in his second letter. He is simply laying out basic and essential facts, by way of reminder and warning for us to stop forgetting the timing.

Then in the verse that follows, Peter warns that “this present heaven and earth” (which underwent God’s judgment and then restoration) is being held for another judgment, a future judgment: **7 But the heavens and the earth which are now, preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.** Peter’s warning is here: **8 But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, 9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.** Even though the scoffers willfully forget the foundation laid out in those first 34 verses, revealing *the timing of when God’s longsuffering coming to another end*, he wants his readers to *stop forgetting*! Peter wants his readers to know that God’s longsuffering will come to an end at the end of Man’s Day, and His judgments will fall on the 7th day, the Day of the Lord.

Peter then explains *how* the Day of the Lord will begin: **10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night,** [and then *how* it ends] **in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.** Let’s relate v. 7: *But the heavens and the earth which are now ... are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men*, to the end of v. 10: *in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements* (i.e., the earth and the

earth's atmosphere) *will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.* Verse 10 is simply revealing how the Day of the Lord begins (as a thief in the night), and how it ends (the heavens will pass with a great noise and the earth will melt by great heat). Herein is part of the warning as well. Peter does not want us to be caught unaware, as so many in Christendom will be!

A thief comes when no one is expecting him, and interestingly, thieves usually break in at night, under the cover of darkness. We have been warned that the Day of the Lord is coming as a thief, even in the night (which would be reference to the end of a day, just prior to the dawn of a new day). We are at the evening of the 6th day, about to go into the night, just prior to the dawn of the 7th day. And while we cannot know the hour, we do know the day! Not the 24-hour day, but the 1,000-year day! In all of this, we have literally been told *when* the thief is coming! It will be in the night, at the end of the 6th day. Can I just say this: **THE THIEF IS COMING TONIGHT!!!**

Now let's read what Jesus said: **Matthew 24:42** **“Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. 43 But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. 44 Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.** Since we cannot know the hour, then why would Jesus tell us to be ready? It is because He wants us to know the day! Jesus ó the Lover of our soul ó does not want us to be caught unaware! Hence He is very long-suffering! Paul says in **I Thessalonians 5:2** **For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. 3 For when they say, “Peace and safety!” then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. 4 But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. 5 You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. 6 Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober. 7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. 8 But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation. 9 For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ**

This sounds a bit like what Peter said: **and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord** [the putting off of the Lord's wrath until a future time] **is salvation.** Yes, God has not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation. But the choice is really up to us. And notice the relationship in this passage in I Thessalonians between putting on the *helmet of the hope of salvation* (v. 8) to our obtaining salvation (v. 9). In the physical world, a helmet on our head would be for the protection of our physical brain, which governs our physical life. In the spiritual world, a helmet would be for the protection of our thoughts, which honestly governs our spiritual life! If *the helmet of the hope of our salvation* would be in place, then this would protect our minds so that we are always mindful of the things that we have already been established in within the scope of the Coming Age.

We'll also remember that part of the overall armor of God in Ephesians chapter six is our taking the *helmet of salvation*: **Ephesians 6:16** **above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. 17 And take the helmet of**

salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Comparing this text with the one in I Thessalonians we see that the helmet of salvation is really *the helmet of the hope of our salvation*. Obviously then, this is referring to the salvation of our soul (something that we do not presently possess), otherwise it would not presently be our hope! Hope is not hope once we possess that for which we hope! Right? If we possess it, it no longer remains a hope.

And then we will remember that the salvation of the soul has to do with sons (i.e., Children of God being led by the Holy Spirit) being placed as firstborn sons, which has to do with the redemption of our body: **Romans 8:23 Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.** The adoption for which we are eagerly waiting (part of our hope) is the redemption of our body, which will come about through our working out our own salvation in fear and trembling, in our realizing the salvation of our soul at the JSOC. (These are things which we will cover in next week's lesson.) This hope then is seen as the helmet of salvation, *the helmet of the hope of our salvation*, a salvation toward which we are to strive and for which God is extending His longsuffering. Continuing in **Romans 8:24 For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.** The phrase of the hope of our salvation of itself then reveals that this is something future, and not something that we presently possess.

These things are not new to us! Remember we are just being reminded of what we already know. And due to the importance ascribed to these things in Scripture, as we have just seen Jesus admonishing us *to watch*, so that the thief in the night does not catch us unaware. One of the seven churches in Asia Minor was also reminded to be watchful! **Revelation 3:3** **“Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you. 4 You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. 5 He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. 6 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”** It should be our persistent and consistent goal to:

- keep our garment from being defiled;
- walk with the Lord in the Coming Age in white garments;
- be found worthy;
- keep our name from being blotted out from the Book of Life;
- have our name confessed before Our Father and before His angels in the coming assembly.

But in order to do that, we must have an ear to hear what the Spirit says to the churches. We have to always and continually live today in *future-perfect tense*! Future-perfect tense is used to describe action that will be completed in the future: $\tilde{\text{I}}$ will [future tense] have finished [past tense] the race. \emptyset Future-perfect tense talks about *the past in the future*: $\tilde{\text{I}}$ will [future tense] have

kept [past tense] the faith. It is as Paul says: **II Timothy 4:8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.** Living in the present so that the future will look upon our past as having done exactly what was necessary to receive the crown of righteousness.

So far we have seen Peter, Paul, Jesus and John all warn us about the thief in the night. Even a bit later in the Book of the Revelation Jesus says: **Revelation 16:15 “Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.”** Here is yet another place wherein we can see two outcomes: those who keep their garments (comparable to the one in Romans chapter two who receives *glory, honor, and immortality* in the age to come), and those who walk naked for all to see their shame (comparable to suffering God’s indignation and wrath in the age to come). And even here (again) it is told what is necessary to have the more desirable outcome ó it is a matter of *keeping watch*. We may not know the hour, but we certainly know we are in the evening of the very last day, the 6th day. We can know that we are fast approaching the very night wherein the thief will come. And if we are a good household servant we will not allow our house to be broken into. We will remain watchful and keep our garments white and clean. (More on that next week.)

And so Peter ends his second epistle with this encouragement: **II Peter 3:17 You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; 18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.** Peter calls the recipients of this letter *beloved*. This word has its root in the word *agape*. He loves them as God loves them, which would be no surprise, as it is God the Holy Spirit writing to them (and not to them only, but to us also) through the pen of Peter. This is an endearing term, an address of great love! Just pause and think of it for a minute. We are His Beloved! He is wooing us to marriage just as King Solomon wooed the Shulamite woman.

And in this great love that Peter has for those to whom he writes, he warns with the greatest of care. Throughout this entire epistle, he has reminded us of specific things related to the Coming Kingdom, not wanting them to be led away with the error of the wicked. He minces no words here, saying: **“Beware.”** This word gives the idea that we are to *preserve ourselves, to watch, to be on guard even through the idea of isolation*, as we are to avoid those who might lead us astray ó even inadvertently; we are to stay away from those who live in error themselves, refusing to repent from their unbelief, and who are seen (from God’s perspective) as *wicked*. That’s pretty strong language! And the reason we are to do with such care is that our *“being led away”* carries with it the possibility that this could happen *passively*, almost without our knowledge or cognitive consent. That’s why we need to beware! Always on guard! Always watchful, lest we would fall from our own *steadfastness*, which means *to drop away, to be driven out of one’s course, to lose, to become inefficient*. In other words, we could lose what we have striven for; another man could take our crown; we could lose our reward; we could end up with wood, hay and straw, instead of gold, silver and precious gems at the JSOC. This is possible for you and

me, even now! Not one of us is exempt from this possibility. And the minute we think we might be immune from falling away is the very minute we could be led astray.

Instead of having this outcome, Peter encourages us to **18 ... grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.**

It's our choice to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord, or to be led away and fall.

But making the choice to grow rather than to fall from our own steadfastness is not the end.

Making the choice to grow, and continue to grow is just a step in the right direction. Spiritually speaking, we have to put one foot in front of another, again and again and again. Once we decide to grow, we must be and remain PROACTIVE. It is the only way we can keep from falling. Inactivity will lead to a fall, but pro-activity will allow us to diligently add to our faith

Even though we have come to the end of the Peter's second letter (through a very brief overview) we are not at the end of our being reminded. Next week we will look at a few more things we need to remember, in particular we will be looking at exactly what is involved in *our loss or gain at the JSOC*.

Again I will close with the same passage that I closed last week: **I Corinthians 15:58**
Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.