

Within the Word

A Study of 2 Peter 2

A Note from Kathy

Tellers at a bank are not trained to spot every possible counterfeit mark. They are simply trained to look for the identification marks of a real bill. Then anything that is contrary is immediately spotted as a fake. Similarly, Christians need discernment, in order to identify and resist false teachers. You are wise to abide in His word, so that anything that is contrary to His word will be easily identified as false.

Observation

Read the chapter, at least twice, before beginning the study guide. This will give the Lord an opportunity to help you see the things he desires for you to know.

1. Last week, we learned that prophecy did not come from the will of man; holy men of God spoke as God's Spirit moved them. Peter quickly lets the reader know that it does not mean there weren't false prophets who slipped in among the real ones. He goes on to say that there are false teachers among us also. What activity are they involved in? What are they busy doing?
2. Because these men profess to be teachers, many will follow, especially since what they offer appeals to the flesh. What becomes of the way of truth?
3. How do these greedy men treat those who are following them?
4. How would you describe these false teachers? What character qualities does Peter specifically mention (vs. 2-3)?
5. In verses 4-9, Peter points to several examples of God's judgment that have already come about. List them below, including a few details.
 1. Angels who sinned, cast into prison, held for judgment
 - 2.
 - 3.

6. There is some very good news in verse 9. God is able to judge those who are in line for His judgment and spare those who are righteous. God spared Noah and his seven family members when he sent the flood. He spared righteous Lot when he sent fire down from heaven to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. Even though, by his actions, we might not describe Lot as righteous, we must remember, “people look on the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart.” The Bible says of Abraham, “He believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.” What made Lot righteous?

7. Look at the description given in verses 10-15. Below, list the words used to describe these men. You may come up with a few more or less than I did.

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| • Slaves to sin and lust | • |
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8. Balaam was a compromising prophet. God spoke through him at times, but as we read in verse 16, God can speak through a donkey, when He so chooses. What else does verse 15 say about Balaam?

9. Verses 17-19 describe these false teachers in more detail. Below, write what you learned about them.

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- 10.** These false teachers are totally without hope. Since they have heard the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ, they may have given lip service to it for a time, but then they returned to their misrepresentation and evil deeds. What does verse 21 say about them?
- 11.** In verse 22, Peter quotes Proverbs 26:11. What is the true character of these false teachers?

Application

1. Peter reminds the reader that there are false prophets standing alongside the real ones. He says there are false teachers walking and talking among them. Is this a problem today? How do you recognize a false teacher?
2. What are some questions to be answered before following a spiritual leader or teacher?
3. It has been a long, long time since the disciples walked the earth. They spoke a great deal about God's coming judgment. Since it has been so long and nothing has happened, should we dismiss the thought of God's judgment and assume they were wrong, or be more prepared and ready for his return?
4. Are you ever concerned when you think of the way sin is escalating in our world today? Do you wonder what will become of you and your loved ones? I believe 2 Peter 2:9 is a good verse for us to commit to memory.

2 Peter 2:9

... the lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment ...

5. False teachers are no different today than yesterday. Their books line the shelves of bookstores with shiny covers and catchy names. Many of them are on television programs that cost millions and millions of dollars. They look like they have all the answers, yet they are springs without water. They promise refreshment, but it is not living water. Their words are empty, but they continue to attract huge crowds. Why do you believe so many people follow them?
6. After studying this chapter, is your heart more at rest, or are you more concerned to find truth?
7. What have you seen in this chapter that calms your spirit?