

W@W2Pet1

Word@Work from BeaconLight

PERSONAL IDENTITY

2 Peter 1:1 *Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who through the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours: (NIV)*

You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - in English, and many other languages

At the start of Peter's second and last letter, he described himself as a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ. Once, he had been a disappointment to Jesus, (see [W@W comment on 1 Peter 1:1](#)). But, when restored, he had been 'sent out' (that is what 'apostle' means) by Jesus to preach the gospel. God worked through his ministry (cf [Gal 2:8](#)), even though he still needed to learn (cf [Gal 2:11-13](#)). Now, at the end of his life, he was glad still to be trusted as Christ's servant.

Although the Bible honours the apostles, Peter was quite clear that his faith was essentially no different from that of every true believer in Jesus. He and the Apostle Paul (cf [1 Cor 15:9](#)) knew that they did not deserve to be in favour with God. It was only through God's sovereign grace that they had been given the ability to trust and to keep trusting - just like every other believer. Peter's place in God's family was not due to his special holiness; but to the extra special righteousness of God the Father and God the Son. They worked together, when the Father accepted the sufferings of Jesus as a full, complete and perfect atonement for the sins of all who would believe.

To be able to believe that is very precious - because it was so costly to Jesus to make us right with God. Peter was personally grateful to Jesus, and wanted others to know too. He accepted the apostolic role, but knew that neither his ministry nor his title could make him holy; only Jesus could do that by His personal sacrifice (see www.crosscheck.org.uk to know more). And however high a pedestal others might put Peter on, he knew that he was just a servant of Jesus Christ. The same is true for all of us. Whatever our calling, position or ministry; we remain servants of Jesus. It is His right to command and direct, it is our privilege to submit and obey. There is no higher calling.

Prayer: *Gracious God. Thank you for the humility of Peter in saying that our faith is as precious as his - because it is equally founded on the costly sacrifice of Jesus. Help me never to 'get above myself', in acting out a role you have not given me, or taking the credit for what only you can do. Help me to delight in serving You, and others for Your sake; at home, at work, in leisure and in the community, as well as in the church. Help me to keep remembering that I am very privileged to be Your servant. In Jesus' Name. Amen.*

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W@W2Pet2

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CONFIDENT SECURITY

2 Peter 1:2 *Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. (NIV)*

You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - *in English, and many other languages*

No right-minded person likes war; we crave for peace, the absence of strife and all hostility. Many religions and therapies claim to calm the mind; as do alcohol, nicotine and other drugs. But the 'peace' Peter writes about has a unique origin and eternal effect. We cannot fight for it, or work to earn it; God's peace comes only through His grace. And its effect is not primarily to make us feel calm (although it will), but to assure us that the dark shadow of God's wrath has been taken away from our horizon, because Jesus bore it all for us.

This peace is part of God's gift at Christ's expense. It enables us to come directly to our Heavenly Father, without fear of judgement (see www.crosscheck.org.uk to find out more). All those who admit that they were the reason that Christ died, are assured of a loving welcome at God's throne. To be welcomed like that is a massive blessing; and a huge relief that God is not angry with us any more. Of course that is only the start of our relationship with the Lord, but without that start there is no way to get to know Him. Then, once we know that God is longing for us to respond to Him, we need to learn how to please Him - and that is what Peter's letter is all about.

Getting to know someone takes a lifetime. It is certainly true in marriage: as time goes on we find out more about our spouse. It is the same with God: the more we know of Him, His love and grace and mercy, the more secure we become. Confidence grows as we receive His peace, knowing that all is well between us and Him. The more we explore the Bible, the greater the knowledge and the deeper the peace. In fact, Jesus said that there is no other way to know peace with God (cf [John 14:6](#)). So many people are looking for that peace today; and they need you to tell them how to find it!

Prayer: *Holy God. Thank you for helping me to believe that I can be at peace with You, through what Jesus has done. I am so glad that I no longer have to be in terror, fearing your judgement on my sins - as I trust in Jesus. Help me to be bold to explain Your way to eternal peace, which assures me of my place in heaven and comforts my soul each day, lest my friends and colleagues should spend a lifetime and eternity separated from Your loving grace. For Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.*

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W@W2Pet3

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ALL WE NEED

2 Peter 1:3 *His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. (NIV)*

You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - *in English, and many other languages*

Many products are advertised as being a 'complete solution'; but they rarely are. However well they work and however wide their scope, you can always find some way in which they can be improved. And just as well for the competitive marketplace! But there will never ever be any effective competition for God's perfect solution to all human need. Although Satan tempts us with lies about a better way, and the world packages temporary attractive diversions which distract us from our internal emptiness; only God provides all that heals and sustains, empowers and satisfies.

That is because only God has all power. Everything we have derives from Him. We came into the world with nothing and we will leave with nothing (cf [1 Tim 6:7](#)); but we only came because God gave us life (cf [Acts 17:25](#)). We owe everything to God who has enabled food to grow and strengthen our bodies. Every day our bodies 'auto-repair' from constant damage, using the complex mechanisms that God has implanted in us. Until we die, God provides for our physical and spiritual needs; and His mercies are freshly applied to our lives each day (cf [Lam 3:21-24](#)). But our greatest need, to be at peace with God today and through all eternity, is only met as we put our faith in Jesus.

But some may say, how do we access all of this rich Divine provision? The answer is simple: get to know God, He wants to provide for you! But, because He is so full of glory, we can only get to know Him on His terms (see www.crosscheck.org.uk to find out more). As we grow in faith, we need to understand that although his love is unconditional - his blessings are conditional upon our obedience to His Word. So to get to know Him, we need to get to know His Word, and obey it (cf [Luke 11:28](#)). That is why Peter is writing to Christians under persecution: they needed to know God in obedience so that they could receive his provision; enabling them to work with Him. And we need to do the same!

Prayer: *Dear Lord God. Thank you for being the complete resource for all of my life and for eternity. Please give me a desire to get to know You better by understanding, obeying Your Word, and giving You thanks each day. Please help me to receive Your merciful provision for my needs today and to learn to work with You. For Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.*

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W@W2Pet4

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FREE TO BE GODLY

2 Peter 1:4 *Through these [God's glory and goodness] he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. (NIV)*

You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - in English, and many other languages

Because God is wonderful in every way, He does not keep us in the dark about His intentions. He not only wants to provide for us, but also to enable us to become like Him in purity of character. The world is still full of evidence of God's good creation, but it was corrupted when humans first sinned (cf [Gen 3:17-19](#)) and the mess continues to spiral out of mankind's control. The worst of it is not in ecological pollution or global warming, but in the deeply rooted, sin-selfish rottenness of humanity.

But God does not want anybody to perish in the swamp of sin. The sacrifice of Jesus was sufficient to win salvation for everybody who will repent and believe the gospel. His plan was to release people from the burden of guilt and the habits of wickedness. In other words, we do not have to be perpetual victims of the lust to do what is wrong. However much the world and the flesh wants to push us into evil, the power of God is available to enable us to resist (cf [Rom 6:14](#), [1 Cor 10:13](#)). Even if the habits of a lifetime continue to drag us into sin, God promises to release those who repent and believe His promises (cf [Titus 2:11-14](#)).

Many Christians struggle against external temptation and internal passions. So this is important news. The battle is not won by our will-power (although that will be strengthened as we repent and trust), but by God's power. It is He who changes our hearts as we believe His promises, and cooperate with him. But repeated failure brings a spiritual apathy which Satan exploits and tells us that we will never be different. And don't forget that if you think like that sometimes, what about other believers? They may work with you or live near you, but hardly dare to hope that they might be freed from besetting sins, and walk confidently with the Lord again. So, share this message with them, and encourage them to believe what God has promised.

Prayer: *Father God. I am glad to be reminded that I do not have to let sin dominate my life. Thank you for Your promises of release for 'captives'. Help me to trust you with all of my heart, so that You may work what is good in my life. I also pray for my Christian friends who have been defeated and no longer struggle against temptation. Please help me to help them see that Your precious promises are for them also. In Jesus' Name. Amen.*

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W@W2Pet5

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ENERGETIC COOPERATION

2 Peter 1:5-7 *For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. (NIV)*

You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - *in English, and many other languages*

Peter previously explained that God is committed to saving all who will trust in Jesus, and sanctifying all who believe His promises (cf [2 Pet 1:3-4](#)). But what about us; are we to be simply inert and enjoy believing, while God does everything around us? No! When we were called into the Kingdom of God, He wanted us to be in relationship with Him; to work with him in His 'family business'. So Peter now identifies some of the spiritual disciplines that are necessary in any workplace, and essential if we are to work effectively with God.

But before the catalogue of attitudes and behaviour, Peter underlines that half-heartedness is not an option. We must 'make every effort'. Like a soldier in training or a student doctor, a careless attitude makes them a danger to themselves and others. And so it is for followers of Christ. It is useless talking about how Jesus has changed your life, if you make no effort to do what is right and good (and forsake the bad). It makes no sense to assume that you know everything and have no need to learn - because that is not true; and the more we get to know God through his Word, the more useful we can be. Self-control is vital in any family and workplace; and in God's Kingdom, those who will not discipline themselves cannot be trusted in ministry.

Keeping going, when everything around and inside you screams for you to stop, demonstrates the cooperation of the believer who refuses to step back, with the Lord who give us the power to advance. Godliness is the likeness of Christ in our natures; kindness in the recognition of mutual honour in God's family. And, love is the ability to keep giving whatever is needed for God to be glorified. Christians like that in the workplace are like gold; solid, dependable, constant, reliable, trustworthy and of great value. They may be ridiculed for following Jesus, but they will be admired for their standards, values and productivity. But, as for those who just talk about faith, their hollowness is evident to all.

Prayer: *Dear Lord. I am ashamed to have been too passive in my faith, somehow assuming that holiness will stick to me if I go to church! How much my character still needs to be reformed, changing my focus of life so that Christ-likeness becomes my primary goal. Please help me to practice the faith I profess and to set objectives for progress in personal disciplines, so that I can be better equipped to work with you. For Your glory's sake. Amen.*

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W@W2Pet6

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EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIP

2 Peter 1:8 *For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. (NIV)*

You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - in English, and many other languages

Employers have to account for the bottom line: how the costs of the business have been overwhelmed by the profit. The Lord also has expectations of our lives. He has paid out: the costly sacrifice of Jesus and the gift of faith (v1), with grace, peace and the privilege of knowing God (v2), plus His divine power and reliable promises. It is not surprising that He expects us to honour His investment in us by wholeheartedly applying spiritual disciplines (vv5-7). When we do so, and demonstrate a passion to be like Christ, we will become productive in the kingdom of God, because God will use us and His glory will be seen.

God will notice and so will the church. Ministry will result in people turning to Christ in repentance and faith, and the church will grow in unity and zeal, instead of establishing mini-empires around personalities as so often happens. In the workplace, people may not be able to pinpoint the cause of the believer's personal productivity, nor the desire to serve others; but they will know that it works for the business, hospital unit, school or flight-deck.

God has designed us to be productive (cf [Gen 1:27-28](#)), but sin pulls us back from being what we ought to be. However, when God's people believe God's Word, and repent of their unproductiveness towards God, the brakes are released and we can thrive in the work that God has given us to do. Although every workplace, church and family are imperfect, the daily grumbles reflect more about the heart of the grumbler, than the competence of the boss or the efficiency of the system. By contrast, a highly disciplined and well motivated man or woman can have an astonishing effect; often bringing hope to the others. So just imagine the glory that comes to God from such an individual eager to be like Jesus! Even though you may be ridiculed, they secretly want you to show that there is a better way.

Prayer: *Gracious Lord. Please forgive me for years of spiritual unfruitfulness. Forgive my grumbling and complaints about the sinful world; rather than being eager to demonstrate that You have power to captivate my life's focus, and to work with You for Your glory. Help me to measure my days by the glory brought to You and not to me; and by the over-riding nature of Your grace, rather than grumbling about the submerging effect of the world's decay. I want to be productive for You: please help me and enable me to develop as a good trainee of heaven. For Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.*

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W@W2Pet7

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DEFECTIVE VISION

2 Peter 1:9 *But if anyone does not have them, he is short-sighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins. (NIV)*

You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - in English, and many other languages

Myopia (short-sightedness) is the inability to focus the eye on distant objects. Peter uses it as an illustration of those Christians who have received so much from God (grace, peace, faith, promises and power), and yet are unwilling to put everything into their relationship with Jesus (cf [2 Pet 1:1-7](#)). So Peter prescribes a spiritual work-out of: practicing goodness, getting to know God, self-control, perseverance, godliness, kindness and love. Then he describes the reason why some believers refuse to work-out for Christ's sake.

They simply do not see the point of exerting themselves, or changing their lifestyle. That is because they cannot see beyond the end of their fingers, and all that they might grasp. The problem is not that they cannot see the future (although they cannot), but that they cannot see the past. They have forgotten all that the Lord Jesus Christ has done for them in the past. They are like children grabbing precious gifts and treating them like trivial toys, soon losing interest. Anybody who fails to be deeply impressed by the sacrifice of Jesus, as the substitutionary punishment for our sins, has no basis for growing in relationship with God.

They may have once gladly heard and received the gospel. But when they forget the enormity of their sins and the greatness of their salvation, there is no motivation for active lifestyle change. And so that part of God's kingdom has a pitifully small spiritual productivity. Alas such Christians are everywhere: they can hardly be called followers of Jesus, because they make no real effort to do so. Yes, they go to church where they find a convenient social group. But put them in the workplace, and they are indistinguishable from well-mannered unbelievers. They cannot see any reason to be different, because they have forgotten the sight of the blooded Jesus dying in agony on that cross for them. What terrible spiritual unproductiveness. It is high time to see the Christian life through Peter's apostolic lens; and decide to repent and change.

Prayer: *Holy God. Please forgive me when I presume upon Your kindness and forget the enormous cost of my salvation to Jesus. Forgive me when I have taken your blessings carelessly and not wanted to honour You with my whole heart and lifestyle. Please help me, through the lens of Peter's letter and other parts of the Bible, to see my sin upon that cross. Help me to work-out spiritually each day so that my character will develop to reflect that of Jesus Christ. For His Name's sake. Amen.*

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W@W2Pet8

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SPIRITUAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

2 Peter 1:10-11 *Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. (NIV)*

You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - in English, and many other languages

Quality control has become a routine part of every production and service process. Inspectors check samples, accountants audit spreadsheets and schools have exams. Each process has 'intended outcomes' that can be measured. But quality control, by itself, can never ensure product consistency or high value service; any more than exams can create knowledge. All it can do is to examine the end points. In fact, it is useless without an overarching system of quality assurance which lays down how the processes can achieve a high quality.

God is not unfair. He will not call us to account on the final Day (when Jesus returns), without telling us what He expects and giving us the resources and power to meet the challenge. [2 Peter 1:2-9](#) sets it all out, and now Peter urges his readers to put the teaching into practice. No college tutor looks for their students to fail: neither does Peter. Indeed, this verse provides encouragement by giving a little preview of God's prize-giving day. We know that our entry into heaven simply depends on faith in Christ's finished work (cf [Heb 10:14](#)); but our reward depends on the quality of our work (cf [1 Cor 3:10-14](#)). The highest reward is Christ's personal recognition of our love, devotion, and obedient service.

Now, He has given us all we need for life and godliness (cf [2 Peter 1:3](#)), so the question is, "How have we used the amazing resources God has provided, including all the promises in the Bible?" Well, ultimately that is the Lord's examination question when we have our final appraisal. But it is very useful to know the question in advance. And no Christian should ever be able to say that they did not know. So, now that we do know, what are we going to do to ensure that we do not fall away from the Lord? Peter has already given the answer in [2 Peter 1:3-7](#)! All we have to do is to get on and do it (see [W@W 2Pet5](#)).

Prayer: *Dear Lord. Sometimes heaven seems so far away and the time gap so long that I distracted away from the urgent need to put everything into my relationship with You. Please forgive me for failing to obey you eagerly, and help me to be freshly motivated by the need to ready for your return at any moment. For Christ's sake. Amen.*

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W@W2Pet9

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ESSENTIAL LEGACY

2 Peter 1:12-15 *So I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are firmly established in the truth you now have. I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body, because I know that I will soon put it aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. And I will make every effort to see that after my departure you will always be able to remember these things. (NIV)*

You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - in English, and many other languages

Peter knows he will soon die; a victim of lies and violence. However, he does not despair. His job for Christ on earth is almost over, but not quite yet. So he writes to ensure a legacy of changed lives, encouraging the church to endure through suffering; eagerly awaiting the return of Jesus. He knows that the chill winds of persecution will stir all kinds of fearful reactions, and that the only way to stay on track as a Christian, is to be constantly reminded of the truth about Christ's salvation, and how to follow Him each day.

It is not that we deliberately forget: we just get so busy, or simply focussed on our responsibilities - that we fail to bring God's truth to the front of our minds. When that happens, our decisions cannot be Godly, and degenerate to the level of our best thoughts. But our bright ideas are not good enough to steer us (or anybody we teach) safely to heaven. In fact, many of the New Testament letters are reminders of what the believers ought to have known and should have been practicing, but they had just slipped out of mind.

In the same way that Peter wanted to make every effort to remind them (which is why he wrote these two letters), serious Christians must make every effort to keep reminding each other, and allow themselves to be freshly stirred by gospel truth. That should be the prophetic work of every ministry - to bring people back to love and obey the truths of God's covenant. This is the reason that Word@Work is delivered to you today: to remind you to live according to the grace of Christ as revealed in the Scriptures. It may also be the reason why God has placed you alongside another believer (or put you in email contact); so that you can also stir them up to love and good works (cf [Heb 10:24](#)).

Prayer: *Father God. Please forgive me for not allowing Your Word the biggest space in my thinking, so that it might be the judge of my desires and decisions. Help me to make every effort to open my mind to Your truth, in church, daily devotions and through Word@Work; and not to assume that I 'know' when really I have forgotten to obey you. Please restore me to walking in Your Light, and enable me to remind other believers to do the same. In Jesus' Name. Amen.*

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W@W2Pet10

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TRUE STORY

2 Peter 1:16-18 *We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eye-witnesses of his majesty. For he received honour and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain. (NIV)*

You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - in English, and many other languages

Today's news, in its many broadcast formats, is rarely fully accurate. Tight schedules, content-hungry editors, careless reporting, syndicated stories and the relentless pursuit of dramatic headlines all risk distorting the truth. Sometimes, critics of the Bible assume that its text suffers from the same defects. It does not! Interestingly, serious historians have less trouble with the Bible's accuracy, than academic theologians who do not want to accept what it says.

Peter intends to leave a 'legacy document', and wants to make sure that nobody will dispute its authenticity. Peter writes as an eye witness of Jesus' ministry, transfiguration, death, resurrection and ascension. He knows that Jesus is the Divine Saviour of the world, and not just a good teacher or visionary peace-leader who came to an untimely end. At the transfiguration, Peter had personally heard the voice from heaven authenticating Jesus Christ as God the Son (cf [Mark 9:2-8](#)). And that evidence was equally experienced by two other witnesses, James and John. The heavenly message totally matched the character of Jesus, whom they had come to know and love.

To rely on information in any workplace, it is essential to have full confidence in the facts. That is especially true when the facts might get you into trouble. The early Christians, many of whom did lose their lives, needed to know that they had not believed a hoax. If they were to continue to follow Jesus despite persecution, they needed to be certain that they had believed the truth. And so do we! Christians today, who have Bible-truth as their rock-solid foundation, cannot be shaken. So these few minutes of reading Word@Work may prove to be more important than you thought - a reminder that you can (and must) fully rely on God's Word, live by it, and pass it on to others. And if your faith gets you into trouble, you can be totally sure that you have not believed a lie. That is all the more reason to share it, with others at work and in the community.

Prayer: *Heavenly Father. Thank you for enabling the apostles to record their eye-witness accounts of being with Jesus. Help me to grow in confidence that Your Word is true and that I can share it, without fear, because You will use it to speak to those who listen. May I show how much I treasure Your Word by reading it, memorising it and sharing it. For Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.*

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W@W2Pet11

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PIVOTAL EVIDENCE

2 Peter 1:19 *And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. (NIV)*

You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - *in English, and many other languages*

Many trials in court are decided on a balance of probabilities: there is no single piece of evidence which alone can prove the case one way or the other. And many people think that is true about religion. They respect sacred writings, but flavour them with the interpretations of scholars, community traditions and pragmatic cultural adaptations. This has happened to Christianity too; and when it does, the gospel becomes diluted and the holiness of God is obscured.

But the truth of Christianity is not a balance of probabilities, but relies on one single piece of evidence, the integrity of the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Although the prophetic writing of the Old Testament suffered from many different interpretations, Peter discovered that Jesus was the key to make sense of what seemed mysterious. The transfiguration of Jesus (cf [Mark 9:2-13](#)), appearing with Moses and Elijah brought it all together for Peter; and the Father's voice affirming Jesus left him in no doubt. Today, Jesus illuminates the entire Bible, and brings God's Word to life. He does not make the Old Testament less valuable: in fact, it is only through the lens of His perfect life and sacrificial death that we can see the true value of all the prophets taught.

So, as God said on the transfiguration mountain, we must pay attention to Jesus (cf [Mark 9:7](#)). Then we will have confidence to see where we are going, and hold a steady course - even when the darkness closes in around us. Peter knew that would soon happen to his readers, and urged them to hold tightly on to Jesus; because He is the pivotal key to living a life of faith which pleases God. Likewise today: do not get seduced by strange teaching which denies what Jesus said and did: even if your friends and colleagues think you should. Stay away from that, as you would from a deadly plague. Keep with Jesus, and let him lead you out of the darkness.

Prayer: *Dear Lord. Thank You for all the evidence of the character and sacrifice of Jesus which I can read in the Bible. Help me to keep paying attention to what He says so that I can live in the light of His truth and steer a steady course through the darkness which sometimes threatens to engulf me. For His dear Name's sake. Amen.*

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GOD'S COPYRIGHT

2 Peter 1:20-21 *Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. (NIV)*

You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - in English, and many other languages

Many people assume that the Bible's writers were also its authors. That is true for most of the books on library shelves; and those editors who compile or condense another author's work will also want to express some personal interpretation. But the Bible is radically different. None of its 40 writers were its original author. The authority behind everything they wrote was God's Holy Spirit. He breathed God's truth into their minds and hearts, enabling them to write things they did not understand, and even accurately predict the future.

So the authorship was God's, even though the text and grammatical style was in the writers' hands. But, they did not invent the ideas, nor did they set out to be world famous authors. They simply allowed God to use them. Neither did they select themselves for the job: God chose them. Nor did they use the opportunity to express their personal views: the Holy Spirit guided them to express the message God gave them in a way that would communicate to their immediate audience, and also to us many centuries later.

All those who seek the Lord, and His will, need to understand this in the Holy Scriptures. If we assume that the Bible's words are human inventions, then we will judge them by our standards. But if we appreciate that God Himself is speaking to us, then we will (or should) be seriously in awe of what we read. Every instruction is to be obeyed, every promise is to be trusted; every rebuke should stimulate repentance, and every warning heeded immediately. In other words, the Word of God is not just good advice or a collection of suggestions to be considered, but Royal commands to be put into action. So expect God to speak when you read the Bible, and when He does, do it!

Prayer: *Almighty God. Thank you for inspiring Godly people to record the thoughts of Your heart in such a way that You can speak to me through the Bible, as you have to many generations before me. Help me to honour Your Word, by humbly accepting what You say and acting upon it. For Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.*

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ENEMY AGENTS

2 Peter 2:1-2 *But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them--bringing swift destruction on themselves. Many will follow their shameful ways and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. (NIV)*

You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - in English, and many other languages

Ever since God has been expressing His truth to human beings, Satan has tried to undermine Divine authority by twisting truth into lies (cf [Gen 3:1-5](#)). The Old Testament prophets were appointed because the official truth-tellers (the kings) had been caught up in the lies, believed then and allowed them space to infiltrate what Israel believed. Additionally, there were other false prophets who seduced the heart of God's people. In the same way, Peter says, false prophets were lurking in the churches. Appearing to be followers of Jesus, they were really enemy agents. They may not have thought of themselves like that, and they would probably have come across as sincere teachers.

But their motives were not from God (cf [Jude 12-13](#)). Their false teaching was focussed on the person and work of Christ. They ignored His deity and the all-sufficiency of His sacrifice. Of course, whenever error is given house-room and not immediately rejected, it ruins believers' discernment and spoils their consciences - so that people start to believe the lies. Peter accurately predicted that such teaching would eventually destroy churches and bring the gospel into disrepute. Unfortunately, these peddlers of untruth are still around. They are often popular, gathering admiring crowds who congratulate 'wise insights' (cf [1 Tim 4:3](#)). Even firm believers may be fooled.

So how can the church be defended against such doctrinal perversion? Firstly we must not be gullible: be on guard, aware that wherever the Lord is working in truth, error will lurk in somebody who speaks persuasively; awaiting a chance of a hearing. Secondly, we need to guard the truth of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world. And the best way to protect the doctrine, is to preach it! Thirdly, do not be fooled into wrong belief just because thousands of other people think it is right: check it carefully against the apostle's teaching - they have been appointed by God to define the truth of the gospel. Then, whenever you find anything else taught, be bold and brave to identify the error and warn others against accepting and believing it.

Prayer: *Holy Father. Thank you for the gospel which has taught me how to be saved. Forgive my gullibility, accepting persuasive talk without checking it against apostolic teaching. Forgive me for accepting doctrinal compromises when Your Word speaks the truth clearly. And forgive me for my reluctance to challenge those who peddle falsehood, and when I have not vigorously supported Biblical leadership. Please give me a renewed passion for knowing, teaching and living Your truth, and refuting error. For Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.*

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WHAT DO THEY WANT?

2 Peter 2:3 *In their greed these teachers will exploit you with stories they have made up. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping. (NIV)*

You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - in English, and many other languages

Peter is warning the church about the dangers of false teachers. Although it may seem odd that people would want to bring error into the house of truth, they do. Jesus told the story about an enemy who sowed weeds among the wheat. He was instructing the disciples, including Peter, to expect enemy action even within the apparently safe fellowship of the church. Today's experience is no different. Although we should naturally expect the weak disadvantaged and Biblically ignorant to be attracted to a loving and caring community; they are just the sort of people who may be exploited by deceivers. The false teachers may be leaders, but often they are those who exercise an influence over others, ignoring their duty to submit to the Elders, and attracting a following for themselves.

What is their motive? Greed! They want something for themselves. In the 1st century it may have been money, power, reputation, the good feeling of being admired for wisdom, or as a reason for those whose party spirit needed a focus. Today all of these may be true. But there may be an unknown motive - such people can be simply driven to deceive and destruct. They are agents controlled by the Enemy, even without knowing it.

But God knows. His view of their hearts and actions is quite clear, and they are under Divine sentence. Although they have 'got away' with their divisive activities thus far, they will be punished. Does this seem harsh? Instead of submitting to His truth, they have made up their own lies. Instead of following Jesus, they want others to follow them along a different road. The wise Christian will not be so gullible, or so easily seduced by persuasive talk. But you will only know what is true (in order to distinguish it from error) if you are willing to submit your own ideas to what the Bible says. A church, student Christian group or workplace fellowship needs to study the Bible, in order to recognise and reject what is false, whoever says it.

Prayer: *God of truth and light. Please help me to be able to distinguish false teachers from those who are true to your Word. Give me courage to reject what is wrong, and encourage those who are faithful to your Word. For Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.*

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NO LAUGHING MATTER

2 Peter 2:4 *For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment; (NIV)*

You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - in English, and many other languages

The ungodly usually laugh at the thought of being judged by God. It would have happened in Peter's day too. The apostle now illustrates how God will certainly bring judgement on the wicked, as well as salvation to the people of faith. [Verses 4-10](#) are really one long sentence: it is a series of statements starting with 'if' (showing what God has already done) and ending with the conclusion - that God knows how to punish the rebellious and save the repentant (cf [2 Peter 2:9-10](#)). On the way, he uses the examples of the fallen angels ([v4](#)), Noah ([v5](#)) and Lot ([v6-8](#)) who have already observed the judgement of God ... it is no laughing matter.

Although we do not know the full story about the rebellion of some of the angels (including Satan), there are helpful clues to the fall of Satan (cf and [Ez 28:12-19](#)), and of some angels (cf [Gen 6:1-4](#)). Peter would have heard Jesus speak of the downfall of Satan (cf [Luke 10:18](#)), and so would John who later wrote [Rev 12:7-9](#). But whatever interpretation we might place upon those verses, Peter is clear that Satan's kingdom is already under siege by God and the church (cf [Matt 16:18](#)), and that some of the rebellious angels are already imprisoned one step away from the lake of fire.

That would have been encouraging news to persecuted Christians who may have despaired, thinking that justice would ever come. It should encourage us too, especially those who are being battered by godless opposition and unquenched wickedness. It will not always be that way! God will deal with your accusers who taunt your faith and mock your Saviour. After evil has run its course, its perpetrators will be punished. So, be strong in the Lord and hold firm to what you believe. Your enemies are His enemies; and the unrepentant will be rewarded for their wickedness when Jesus comes to judge. Importantly, it is not for us to 'get our own back' because God has said, "It is mine to avenge, I will repay ..." ([Deut 32:35](#)). So, you can safely leave God to be the judge, knowing that He has already limited the power of evil, and will complete its purge when Jesus comes again.

Prayer: *Almighty God. Thank You that evil is not totally free to do as it pleases. Please encourage me that You will punish all wickedness one day, and until then evil is unable to break through the limits you set in place. Help me to stand firm, trusting in Your final victory over all that rebels against You, and help me to leave judgement to You rather than taking the law into my own hands. For Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.*

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TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN

2 Peter 2:5 ... if he did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others; (NIV)

You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - in English, and many other languages

Some people wonder how God can be both loving and wrathful at the same time. It is like two sides of the same coin, or the difference between the kind palm and the angry fist of the same hand. Today's illustration from Peter's catalogue of examples goes back to Noah and the flood. You can read the story in [Genesis 6:9-9:19](#). God saw that everybody (apart from Noah's family) had been corrupted to the point of violence, and that there was no hope for them except to be destroyed (cf [Gen 6:11-13](#)). Not only would the people perish, but all the livestock as well. But one family and an ark-full of animals survived to start again with God.

But the attractive story of animals in the ark carries only a small part of God's message. The great flood became an important object lesson to God's people; of judgement and salvation. Firstly, God did not hesitate to pronounce judgement on the wicked; however He waited until Noah had built the ark. During those long years of construction, God gave both time and explanation of His intentions to those who would later perish, through Noah who is described as a 'preacher of righteousness'. But Noah's faith did not excite others to join him, far from it. They rejected the message, proving that God's judgement was fair and just. Yet, at the same time, God provided a way of salvation for Noah's family, who benefited because they believed.

All this was to help us understand Jesus. He was God's ultimate way of salvation, of which the 'ark' is just a picture. In Christ alone, the church will be safe in the final judgement, although that will be by fire and not by water (cf [2 Pet 3:5-7](#)). Even Noah was not perfect after the flood (cf [Gen 9:20-29](#)). He and we all need the sacrifice of Jesus to atone for our sins (see www.crosscheck.org.uk to find out more). You may say, if Noah preached righteousness and nobody listened, then he was not a good preacher! But the message was right, even though the hearers did not listen. It is the same today. Although many may despise our godly lifestyle and gospel explanations, their refusal to listen to God's Word proves the rightness of their final judgement (cf [Heb 11:7](#)). That is why we should keep witnessing to our friends and colleagues while there is still time for them to repent.

Prayer: Holy God. I thank You for the protection of salvation that is mine through Jesus alone; but I am distressed for my friends and colleagues who see no need to repent. Help me to live a Gospel-compatible life and be ready to explain the reason why I am confident of Your mercy, so that others might also enter into Your salvation. For Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

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KNOWING HOW TO DECIDE

2 Peter 2:6-9 ... if he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by burning them to ashes, and made them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by the filthy lives of lawless men (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard) - if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment. (NIV)

You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - in English, and many other languages

"Rightly or wrongly ..." a friend was heard to say, "I made the decision". He implied that it was better to make any decision than not to decide at all. Alas too many businesses get trapped by decisions that they were not ready to make, and regret afterwards. Of course, it is important to make decisions, but they need to be the right choices. God always makes the right choice. He knows how to judge between what is good and evil, right and wrong. And therefore His judgements are always 'safe' (as our legal friends would say); in other words, there is no possibility of any valid objection, because He is always right.

Peter wants his readers, Christians who would suffer for the Name of Jesus, to understand that they will be vindicated in the end. Taking the example of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all the wickedness they represented, (cf [Gen 19:1-29](#)) Peter says that God knew how to rescue Lot and punish his neighbours. This is important. There is no suggestion that Lot had any idea that God had him and the city in such sharp focus. And however much the wrong attitudes and actions around him must have grieved Lot, he could not have imagined how God would sort it all out. But God did.

Some of our doubting, in situations that seem insoluble, stems from forgetting that God knows how to decide and separate the fate of the godly from that of the ungodly. If we ignore this truth, we will either be panicked into sorting it out ourselves, or despair because we cannot see how God can do anything, or end up joining the wicked (at least in thought) because we blur the distinction which God sees very sharply. If we are to live godly lives in a wicked world, we need to be certain that God knows all about it, and that in the end, He will know how to rescue the righteous, and bring the reward of punishment to the unrighteous. So, do not falter or alter your course away from Jesus! God always gets it right! And, please share these verses with your Christian friends and colleagues - without this encouragement we can all be tempted away from trusting the Lord when life is tough.

Prayer: *Dear Lord. Thank You that You really do know how to make the right decisions. And also that You will rescue those who love You. I believe that you will do this at the end of time, but I am grateful that Your hand of kindness and protection is upon me now, as well. Please forgive me when I doubt that You know what You are doing. Help me to trust that You will always do the right thing, at the right time. For Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.*

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W@W2Pet18

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TWIN ROUTES TO DISASTER

2 Peter 2:9-10a ... the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment. This is especially true of those who follow the corrupt desire of the sinful nature and despise authority. (NIV)

You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - in English, and many other languages

Although judgement may not seem an encouraging topic for a devotional, Peter intended it to bring courage to those who were so downhearted that they were tempted to give up, thinking that evil might win. In his detailed description of those who are under God's wrath, Peter identifies two character defects that drag people to hell, unless they repent and are saved. And believers should be alerted to identify those parts of our human nature which Satan may tempt, in order to pull us away from following Jesus.

We (including the most powerful preachers and wonderful worshippers) all have a sinful nature. We know that from the Scripture (cf [Rom 7:18](#)) and the repeated experience of sinning, even when we know that we should not. We are born sinners (cf [Ps 51:5](#)), and have been further corrupted by the world, and the Devil as well as our own desires. To ignore that fact, and allow ourselves to follow what seems 'natural' is like crossing a busy road blindfolded - it will end in disaster. What matters, is making the choice not to follow what corruption commands, and, instead, following Jesus (cf [Rom 8:13](#)).

A second set of alarm bells should ring when people despise authority, any authority (cf [2 Pet 3:17](#)). However camouflaged, it is a mind-set that is so self-centred that it cannot see anybody higher than themselves. This is dangerous in any business or profession, in politics or the church. Not only will it inevitably hurt other people, but it cannot give the first place to Jesus - who is Lord of all. The hell-bound have this deeply rooted in their belief system and it totally validates God's judgement. But Christians also need to use this truth as a mirror (cf [James 1:22-25](#)), asking God's help to see if any of this evil has seeped into our character. In addition, when we see friends and colleagues caught up with following corruption naturally and despising authority, we can see how much they need Jesus; and so our prayers and spoken witness may be life-saving (cf [Jude 22-23](#)).

Prayer: Dear Lord God. Thank You for alerting me to those parts of my character that may not yet be fully given over to You. Please help me to see myself as you see me, and help me to choose not to follow the corruption that is in the world, nor to have a rebellious and proud heart. Where these things have become part of my character, help me to repent and choose to follow Jesus. I also pray for my friends and colleagues who have little idea of the judgement that awaits them; please bring them to salvation and enable me to be a good witness to the transforming power of Christ. In His Name. Amen.

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ARROGANCE AND SLANDER

2 Peter 2:10b-11 *Bold and arrogant, these men are not afraid to slander celestial beings; yet even angels, although they are stronger and more powerful, do not bring slanderous accusations against such beings in the presence of the Lord. (NIV)*

You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - in English, and many other languages

Slander, the false statement that maliciously ruins reputations, does not stalk alone. Its associate is the heart-attitude of arrogance. Arrogant people think that they have the right to exalt themselves by speaking ill of others. Wherever you see one of these ugly companions, the other is lurking nearby; both are dangerous and neither can be trusted. Today's verse shows that there is no limit to the authorities which such people will try to topple by their bad-speaking. As with every evil act, there is no satisfaction in being 'a little bad', and without repentance, sin will escalate until it engulfs its perpetrators.

It is not clear who are the 'celestial beings' in this passage. Of the possibilities of church members, church leaders, good angels or fallen angels it is the latter that seems to fit the context best. The false teachers have presumed to make accusations about them before God's throne (as Satan does in [Rev 12:9-10](#)). It may seem ludicrous that they would dare to try to get believers, angels or demons in trouble with God; but arrogance knows no bounds, and rebellion craves recognition - even from God. But by contrast, the loyal angels do not even whisper any complaint in God's presence. They know the truth of [Deut 32:35](#) and [Heb 10:30](#) where God says, "It is mine to avenge, I will repay".

Alas, the false teachers who have invaded the church over the centuries understand no such respect; they destroy the reputations of the wise in order to establish their own authority. Powerful and plausible they may be, but when motivated by arrogance they will express themselves in slander, and try to tear down what God wants to build up. The secular versions can be found in every company and profession; they will be found out eventually, but meanwhile they are to be pitied and prayed for - that they may find Christ. But the church needs strong and Godly leadership to identify these spiritual posers, and ensure that they do not have the limelight they seek. So, as well as praying for the arrogant at work, also pray that your church leaders will know how to deal with the malicious slanderers within the church. In the end, the Lord will deal with both.

Prayer: *Almighty God. Although it would be nice to think that everybody around me is reasonable and trustworthy, I know that is not so. I now pray for those whose arrogance seems unlimited, and who have no fear of anybody or even of Your authority. Please bring them to repentance and faith, before they face Your judgement. And please give wisdom and courage to my spiritual leaders so that they may guard the flock against the arrogant slander of those who seek to gain influence in the church. For Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.*

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BLASPHEMY AND IGNORANCE

2 Peter 2:12 *But these men blaspheme in matters they do not understand. They are like brute beasts, creatures of instinct, born only to be caught and destroyed, and like beasts they too will perish. (NIV)*

You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - in English, and many other languages

There are few more hurtful sounds than hearing a loved one being slandered. And blasphemy is slander against God, and it ought to be offensive to those who love Jesus. As we saw yesterday, arrogance and slander walk darkly together; and today, we see that blasphemy and ignorance are linked. Indeed, anybody who had a full understanding for the awesomeness of Almighty God, with His limitless power to strengthen the church and destroy the wicked, would hardly dare to offend His honour. So, blasphemy will thrive where there is ignorance of God, His Word and His ways.

Peter declares that the false teachers of the early church were not only puffed up with their own importance, but they did not know what they were talking about. They were responding to their unknown inner passions just like wild animals; they were doing whatever would satisfy themselves; and they had no concept of the consequence of their actions or personal lusts. Although it seems a rather harsh analysis, if they behaved towards God like animals with no souls, they were setting themselves up to forfeit their souls (cf [Matt 16:24-27](#)).

Today's verse is a potent reminder of the hazards of assuming to be a teacher when you don't know what you are talking about (cf [James 3:1](#)). Those who presume to speak in Christ's Name but without His authority are treading dangerously. So too are our friends and colleagues who blaspheme in ignorance, using Divine Names as verbal playthings. However, what is needed is not just a change of behaviour, but a change of heart. But such transformation is impossible without being informed of the truth; and that is why we must proclaim the gospel (cf [Rom 10:14](#)). Mouths that offend God will only start to please Him when they hear and accept what He says about Himself in the Scriptures; then their ignorance will be removed: and we might pray that they will believe what they hear. Then their animal nature be replaced by a heart which is sensitive to please God.

Prayer: *Holy God. If I find blasphemy offensive, how much more must You be grieved and angered by such dishonour. Help me to keep sensitive to what pleases and offends You so that my relationship with You can grow. I do pray for those who seem to have no regard for You and feel confident to abuse Your Holy Name. Please have mercy upon them and bring them to repentance and faith as someone explains the truth to them: and if You want me to be involved, please let me know. So help me to keep alert and on-side with You in my work and worship. In Christ's Name. Amen.*

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