

The Possibility of Apostasy

by Paris Reidhead

The sermon warns against the possibility of apostasy, highlighting the characteristics of false teachers and the consequences of turning away from one's faith in Christ.

Duration: 54:21

Scripture: 2 Peter 2:1, 2 Peter 2:16-21

Topics: "Apostasy"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the warning given by Peter in 2 Peter chapter 2 about false teachers. He emphasizes the importance of having a strong offense, which is a positive testimony for Jesus Christ, as the best defense against opponents of the gospel. The preacher reads through the entire chapter, highlighting key verses that describe these false teachers as 'wells without water' and 'clouds carried with a tempest.' He warns the congregation about the allure of these teachers who speak great swelling words of vanity and promise liberty, but are actually servants of corruption. The preacher concludes by urging the listeners to be cautious and not be swayed by seducing teachers, as turning away from the way of righteousness can have dire consequences.

Transcript

Would you turn please to 2 Peter chapter 2, and I shall read more of the chapters than we did this morning, beginning with the first verse and reading straight through the chapter. Remember our theme, possibility of apostasy. But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

And many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you, whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not. For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment, and spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly, and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them with an overthrow, making them an example unto those that after should live ungodly, and delivered just Lot vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked.

For that righteous man dwelling among them, and seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds. The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished. But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government, presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.

For as angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord, but these as natural brute beasts made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of things that they understand not, and shall utterly perish in their own corruption, and shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they counted pleasure to riot in the daytime. Spots they are in blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings, while they feast with you, having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin, beguiling unstable souls. On heart they have exercised with covetous practices, cursed children, which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray following the way of Balaam, the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness, but was rebuked for his iniquity, the dumb ass speaking with man's voice, forbade the madness of the prophet.

These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest, to whom the midst of darkness is reserved forever, for when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escape from them who live in the air, while they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption, for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage, for if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning, for it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, that after they have known it to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them, but it has happened unto them according to the true proverb, the dog is turned to his own vomit again and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire. It seems to me very natural that individuals who know and love Jesus Christ would want to make others know him, those that have been born of God would want to have others come to know the joy and peace that they've experienced. It seems quite unnatural, actually unbelievable, that there should be men and women dedicated to this sole task of dissuading people from following Jesus Christ, to use their skill and their talent and their ability in proselytizing to impiety.

This just seems impossible, but this is the case. In fact, we could say that there are far too few who are seeking to share the gospel with men and women that are in desperate dying need of it, far too many that are using all of their ability and persuasiveness to induce men and women from to forsake the way of life. We would ask you tonight to examine your own experience.

If you haven't time to do it, there may be suggestions given that will be of help to you this evening. Have you encountered along the way those that by some either direct statement or by subtle suggestion have tried to dissuade you from the way that you've accepted and to which you've committed yourself? I think back in my own experience and remember that shortly after I came to a real knowledge of Jesus Christ and committed my life to him, that I heard such voices as these that dimly echo in my memory. Well, religion is all right, but remember you've got to keep it in balance.

You don't want to go overboard on it. And again, a man that employed me for a time when I was a student in Bible school, when he pointed to his liquor cabinet and said, the last fellow I had, I had to fire because he used this too much. But he said, it would really give me pleasure to see you go to it now and then.

And when I stayed with him for some three months and didn't, he said to me as I left, he said, all I can say is you're a fanatic. Every pressure that this man had possibly been able to exert on me, he had done trying to get me to do the thing which had been such a problem in his life and in the lives of so many others. So if you can join to my experience and others that I've not mentioned your own, I'm sure you will agree that Peter was quite wise and correct when he sought to warn us against seducing teachers.

This morning we spoke concerning teachers again, but I think that this chapter that we had no time to touch in the morning service will give us something further concerning the description of teachers or those who would seek to woo us away from this way of life. So we will confine our attention this evening to verses 17 through 21 and look immediately to verse 17 to see the description of teachers that would dissuade us from this way. They are to call first wells or fountains without water.

Supposedly teachers have a fountain of wisdom upon which they're to draw. They have spent time in school, they've spent time in preparation, they've had experiences, and everyone that would in any wise try to influence your life is going to make some claim of authority, either experiences that he's had or observations that he's made. Peter says these are wells without water.

Water speaks to us of reality, it speaks to us of true happiness. It would speak further of a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ that would enable a Christian to have something to share. Those who would come to you and seek to prove to you the Bible isn't true, that Jesus Christ is not God, and that you're acting in foolishness to commit your life to him are claiming to have some grounds for their statement.

Peter says they're wells without water. But my experience has been that the best defense in a situation of this sort is probably a strong offense. And if you have a positive testimony for the Lord Jesus Christ, and you're seeking to make him known, you'll be amazed at what wonderful insulation this provides.

And you'll be surprised how quickly it will be that such will not longer waste their effort on you. The best thing that you can have in such a situation where you have opponents of the gospel is to be known as so affirmatively committed to Christ that you just can't be dissuaded that you're hopeless. And I say this both is good insulation and it furnishes a marvelous opportunity for witness.

You're going to be in a most dangerous predicament if your well is dry. I recall hearing of a testimony that someone gave in a rural church years ago. For years and years, every time testimonies were offered, this good man gave the same one.

He said, when I was 20 years of age, I dipped my bucket into the well of salvation, and I've never had to dip again. Well, finally, after hearing this testimony for 20 years, one man said, as the other finished, I've heard my good brother say that so many years ago, he dipped the bucket into the well of salvation. He's never had to dip again.

But I would suggest to him that if he looks in that bucket, he'll find it's full of wiggle tail. And I think that there's a good many Christians whose lives are filled with wiggle tails because they just haven't dipped frequently enough into the word of God and in fellowship. And they really haven't anything very refreshing to share.

Wells without water, the characterizes the those who would seek to dissuade you from the way of Christ. But I wonder if you in turn have that water that with which you can answer their need and sometimes meet the question of their own heart. Or frequently, those that are seeking to push you out of the way are simply

trying to test whether or not this way is so good that you won't be pushed.

Then we find that Peter not only says they're wells without water, but he describes them as clouds that are carried with a tempest. Clouds that promise rain, but there have not. These clouds are driven by a tempest of pride and ambition.

And almost invariably, if you'll check with the person that is militantly opposed to Christ and is anxiously seeking to uproot you from your faith, you'll find that somewhere in past or her past, there is an unfortunate experience in respect to religion or Christianity or the gospel. So frequently, the one that would seek to keep you from church says, well, I went, my folks dragged me when I got old enough. I said I'd never go.

They seem to have good excuses and good reasons. But actually, the opinion of Peter, I think, is one that you've got to continually keep before you. There's some reason why, some reason why.

One of the things that I have found is that sometimes people are trying to live down their past. And I found some preachers that were trained in evangelical schools and reared in firm, warm Christian homes, that when they get out, they become militantly anti-evangelical or anti-gospel and sometimes even anti-Christian. But you see, they're barking too loudly to avoid suspicion.

Really, what they're trying to do is continually prove to themselves that they were right in the decision that they made. And if they can induce you to go their way, then, of course, they have in you that added proof they need. Clouds driven by tempest, the tempest of fear, fear of being discovered on the one hand or a fear of being given some term that they feel is difficult.

Today, with modern literature, writing with such vehement and vicious terms, tones of fundamentalism, it's almost amazing to find some of my good brethren who believe like I do, disavowing the fact that they believe in the fundamentals or that they're fundamentalists. I am just too stupid, I guess, to learn or something, but not that I want to associate with all the things which are to be criticized, but I believe in the fundamentals of the faith. And if that makes me a fundamentalist, then I can't do anything about it.

And the castigations and the allegations and all of the diatribe leveled against our kind, all right, we're big enough, I trust in Christ to bear it. Let's not try to avoid the term. Strange how often people say, well, I'm evangelical, not fundamental.

That's like saying that I like food, but I don't want to eat calories. They're the same thing. It's just a matter of how you call it, you see, and you can't, you can't avoid it.

If you're, if you're going to be evangelical in a biblical sense, then you're going to have to believe in the fundamentals. So why, why, why run? Why run? So frequently people are clouds that are driven with the tempest of fear of having a term leveled at them. Again, someone may in vanity and ambition want to aspire to someplace.

He's teaching in a school or he's working in a place and he feels that if he's known as an evangelical Christian, why his chances of promotion are going to be lessened. And so you just going to slip around a little bit and he will listen to the person who comes along and says, you know, it's all right to go to church, but don't teach a Sunday school class. It's all right to be a member of the church, but don't let anyone know your time.

Don't take an office in the church. Oh yes, I've had men come to me with corporations and say that they've been given this advice by their superiors. If they were to make the rapid climb that otherwise would be expected of them.

And these are the voices, clouds with out rain carried with a tempest. Almost invariably such arguments come with flattery. An old person as good as you are in school with the brain you have and intelligence you have is the way it starts.

Anyone with your personality and your prospects. Fortunately, some of us have not, don't have enough of either prospects or personality or intelligence to be seduced this way by such. But if you are in that place where they're putting that kind of pressure on you, remember that if the situation were turned around, they wouldn't think you were that wise or that good prospects.

No, they're going to appeal to your vanity. And if they can convert you to their way of thinking, it's going to be a feather in their cap and it's going to also confirm them in their present attitude. Again, they not only will make an appeal to your vanity, but they're going to appeal to knowledge and to science.

And they're going to use, as Peter says, great swelling words, lofty expressions with appeals to nowadays, of course, the appeal is to psychology. The field of physics with all that it's done is more or less confirmed in many respects, at least I'm told, the Christian position. And at least substantiated it in ways that were not so few decades ago.

But the field now where it's open season on the Christian is psychology. And we're going to find an increasing deluge of attack upon us because we stand for such old fashioned things as discipline and the reality of sin and the necessity of salvation, forgiveness. So great swelling words is the term Peter uses.

They allure with these swelling words, great sound but little sense is the way it's been characterized by some. Now all the advantage is theirs, these seducing teachers that are going to draw you away from the things of Christ. Because they're appealing to your carnal appetites and your corrupt affections.

They're going to appeal to you on the level that the gospel doesn't. For the scripture says self-denial is the path and obedience is the path. Submission to Christ is the way.

So when someone comes along and says this way is quite wrong, absolutely wrong, and then gives full license to indulge affections and appetites, you understand that all the leverage is there from a human point of view. And of course the ones that they're going to work the hardest on are the ones that have made a real effort to escape from the world. That is its corruptions and its lusts.

These are the ones for apparently there's far greater satisfaction in getting someone that has had a vibrant testimony for Christ to deny the Lord and turn away than someone that's been kind of an embarrassment from the very first. Peter describes these not only as being wells or fountains without water and clouds carried about with a tempest, but he also says that they are the slaves of corruption in the 19th verse. While they promise liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption, the born slaves of corruption.

And if it would be possible for one to look into the lives fully of these that would be most avid and anxious to dissuade you from the path of Christ, you'd find that they're in terrifying bondage, dreadful bondage. Peter is saying that anyone that has known less than the liberty that is in Christ is a slave. And how can one slave produce freedom for another? The only one who can possibly be the means of bringing one who's in bondage to freedom is the one that himself has experienced that freedom.

But notice now a description not only of the teacher that does the, puts forth the effort to get you to give up your faith, but notice the description of the person who submits to this. Let's look at the supposition for from verse 20 on, you have an illustration. Peter isn't describing an individual, nor is he setting forth a doctrine, but rather he is supposing, or he is saying, these things are true of the one who does.

So by giving the illustration, he enables you to see your own heart and your own life. The man who is apostate is described by Peter here in this 20th verse. He is one that has had some contact with Christ.

He sees that salvation is by Jesus Christ alone, even by his shed blood for the remission of sins and by his righteousness imputed to make us acceptable with God. For he has escaped the pollutions of the world to the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The only one who can be apostate therefore is the one who knows this much about Christ.

Furthermore, he not only has this correct information about Christ, he has experienced so much from this knowledge of Christ, so as to have been in a considerable degree changed by it and delivered from the pollution of the world. He has also practically and experimentally known the way of righteousness. Now look back on that.

Peter is describing the apostate, the one who listens to the enticement, hears it, heeds it, and turns away from Christ. What is he saying to us? The only one that can be apostate is the one that has had this degree of knowledge of Christ. Now you're going to say, was he saved? And I'm going to say, Peter didn't use the word, so why make me use the word? I don't know.

I know what Peter says. I'll stick to what Peter said. If you want to take what Peter said and say this equals, that's up to you.

As far as I'm concerned, I'm going to stay right with the text. Not because I'm wise, but because I'm a coward and I don't know what else to say, because this is what the text says and this is what I want you to see. I want you to stick with the word and not to take terms, because if I ring the changes on terms, you may not, as I've said before, most people don't know what Calvin taught or Arminius taught.

They just have been conditioned to know which word to get mad at, and if I use one word or the other, they're going to get mad at it. And so I'm going to try to avoid using the word so as to cause you to think. Now look back, see what Peter said.

Let's go to the 20th verse. For it is after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Now they know that salvation is by Jesus Christ alone, by his blood for the remission of sins, by his righteousness making us acceptable to God.

For then they have experienced so much from this knowledge, so as to have been in a great degree changed by it, and said to be delivered from the pollutions of the world. Furthermore they have known the way of righteousness in verse 21. I'm not going to give it a term.

We'll let the text stand for itself. This is the individual who is to become so entangled with the world as to be overcome by the world. He is to be so overcome by the world as to turn away finally and forever from the holy commandment delivered to him.

That's what the text says. Now you say well that doesn't apply to me. But Peter intended it to apply to you.

Say well I'm a Christian. I've been saved. Peter writing to people just like you and me.

And this description is given to us that we should seriously consider it. And we should recognize that though it is a supposition, it's a possibility. And he is telling you that you should not lightly pass it by.

First, when you consider how extremely weak we are by nature, and how prone to sin we are, and how often we've fallen in the past, you're not going to lightly pass this scripture by. Then when you consider what innumerable temptations constantly beset us, and how the daily we are exposed to these temptations. Furthermore, when you consider that there's an arch enemy of God and of us, that using all of his power and his intelligence and his genius to manipulate us into situations and circumstances where we're going to be susceptible to suggestion, then you will understand why it is that Peter is writing to you.

Why he's writing to me. But we'll add to these three things this. When you consider what the scriptures have said, and what of our experience is taught on this subject, then you will be careful.

I'm going to take you with me through several scriptures briefly. And I want you to see them. And I think if you turn quickly, we have sword will for a few moments, it will be very profitable to you.

Would you turn to first Timothy chapter one in verse 19. Paul is writing to the young man Timothy, and he is telling him that there were problems that are the encountered by him. Notice now, I read verse 18 and through 20.

So the setting is complete. This charge I commit onto thee son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee that thou mightest by them wore a good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience, which some having put away concerning concerning faith have made shipwreck of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme. Now there it is.

Prophecies went before on thee that thou by them mightest for a good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience. Then he warns him, which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck. Now that's the scripture.

Come with me then if you will, please on to first Timothy four one. Here again, the spirit of God has something to say for us. Now, the spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times, some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils.

We're in the latter times. No question about that. And therefore, we should expect from this that seducing spirits and doctrines of devils would be more rampant than any other time in the past.

And the spirit speaketh expressly, some shall depart from the faith. Well, it behooves us to accept the scripture. Will you turn to Galatians chapter four, verses nine to eleven.

Galatians four, nine to eleven. Paul is writing to the church at Galatia, which has been embiggled into that position of trying to establish again, though they were Gentiles, the Jewish legalism, laws and offerings and ceremonies and so on. But now after that you have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn you again to the weak and beggarly elements whereunto you desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days and months and times and years.

I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain. Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am, for I am as ye are. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain.

Well, why? He's preached, he's prayed, he says, I labor night and day, travail in prayer for you. Back to second Timothy, if you please. Chapter four and verse ten.

Paul is writing and elsewhere he writes of this young man Demas with such appreciation and such gratitude. But now this one of the last letters of the apostle, which he gives his valedictory, the time I'm ready to be offered, the time of my departure is at hand. He has to say in verse ten, Demas hath forsaken.

Oh, what a sad word. Having loved this present world and is departed unto Thessalonians. What a sad testimony that he had to write this of Demas.

Let me ask you, why, if there were no danger to you, would the scripture have so frequently and so urgently warned you to hold fast, to hold steady, to press, to move, to pray? You think God has just put these words in for someone else of lesser stuff than we? No, because there is danger. God has written this way to me and he's written this way to you. Do you think that the stony ground believers where the seed fell and sprang up and straightway when the sun fell upon it and withered away, I say, do you think stony ground believers are so few that we need to be cognizant of it? The 20th century.

Do you think thorny ground believers where the seed fell among thorns and sprang up but it was straightway choked by the thorns that cares of this world? Say, do you think these are so few that this doesn't apply now? Oh, to the contrary. It means then that Peter is writing to people just such as we are in situations similar to ours. How many there are that try to invalidate the danger by an appeal to some party in which they belong or some group, some human system, but this is most unwise.

So easy to attach to oneself to a teacher or a scheme to such a degree that one can reject the scripture. It's so easy to find out what's done. I think of a lady down in Jacksonville, Florida.

I was meeting there in South Jacksonville and there was one that was quite ill and she came to this home and the hostess said, well, why don't you talk to Storita who's here with us for meetings about the Lord for the body? You know, the Lord's meals. I'm sure he'd be very glad to talk with you. She listened for a few moments and then she said, before I talk with him, I'm going to go talk to my pastor and find what we believe about this.

The next day or two days later, she came back and she said, well, I'm awfully sorry, but in our church, we don't believe in the Lord, so I won't talk to him. But you see, it wasn't a question of what the word says. It was a question of what do we believe in our church? She detached herself to a group and the group thinking had absolutely closed her mind and prejudiced her heart against anything that God might do for her or say to her.

A more personal illustration on this score. When we were in Africa, I was sick. I had everything, I guess, was going around.

I didn't have leprosy, so don't be afraid, but I had malaria over and over again and dysentery, just tough, that was all. One day, I had, I think, 80 grains of quinine given to me and practically infected my eyesight. I think my wife's prayers spared me because I had terrific pain and my sight was dimming, but I'm still allergic to quinine because of it, by the way.

So, when I got back from Africa, I talked with my wife and I said, isn't it funny? We drank the same water, bitten by the same mosquitoes. I got sick. You didn't.

How is it? She said, well, God gave me a verse on the ship going over and I just claimed that every day while I was in Africa. I said, what was that? Well, she said it was Psalm 91, plague shall not deny thy dwelling and not near you. I said, well, why didn't you share it with me? Share it with you, you old rigid dispensationalist, you ought to talk me out of it and told me it was for the Jews and I'd have been as sick as you were and who'd have taken care of it.

Well, I'm grateful for such love as that, that's willing to protect me from myself, but it illustrates the point that it's so easy for one to attach themselves to a point of view or a scheme of interpretation that they can reject the scriptures. There are some that would shut their ears to the primary meaning of this text because they suppose that it disagrees with some dogma of their group. Now listen, don't you do that.

You submit to the text, will you? Submit to it as God's caution, God's warning to yourself and improve the text, use the text so that you don't become an example of the very thing he's talking about. It's extremely important that we should not join that company that Christ condemned, who said the traditions of the elders made the word of God of none effect. I mentioned just recently Theodore of Bava, the successor to John Calvin, who understood exactly the presentation of this text as I'm enforcing upon your mind and I think would deserve the term of being called Calvinist.

In one of his last epistles, Theodore of Bava wrote to a friend and he said, oh God, my daily prayer to thee is that thou will keep me from making shipwreck of my soul when I am just in sight of the harbor. What did he mean? He meant the faith that saves is a faith that perseveres, a faith that presses on. And he knew that as long as he lived in this world, his little, the bark of his little boat, his little life would go to have crosswinds blow on it and that he wanted to go steadfast in obedience to the very end.

Notice now the end of the apostate. We've seen the warning and the possibility, but notice the end. For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.

For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than after they have known it to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. Notice that he has said that the last state of the apostate is far worse than the beginning. In the beginning, he was under the sentence that sin brings, but now something has been added to this.

In respect to guilt, you'll have to notice that his guilt is the greater because of the light that he has secured. He has more light and more light always brings more more guilt. He's had enough light of the gospel to know who Jesus Christ is and what he has done and to have partaken to sufficient degree that his life has been changed and he's escaped the pollutions of the world through this knowledge of Christ.

He has had enough light to illumine his conscience and to enable him to see right and wrong and to choose right and to avoid wrong. He's had light enough to open the scripture to him. All of this has caused him to have greater guilt when he turns aside in apostasy.

But every step into apostasy was aggravated by the fact that he had to go directly against all the ministries of the Holy Spirit. It implies that if he had the Holy Spirit has tried to restrain him and tried to hold him. Now

since he's had so much light and had so much ministry his guilt is beyond anything it would have been if he had not known Christ at all.

Our Lord Jesus Christ in John 15 22 said if I had not come they had not known sin but now that I have come they have no cloak for their sin and so this is what Peter is saying. In departing from God they are departing from this way of life this way of righteousness they've dishonored God they've disgraced the gospel they have weakened the hands of the godly and they've hardened the hearts of the impenitent no wonder their guilt is greater. But in respect to bondage notice something else since it was true that they became Christians by the ministry or they committed themselves to this way and you define it since they came to this place the Spirit of God had to move them he had to mind to their need and to the work of Christ he had to cause them to see and to decide to commit themselves to the degree they did to Christ and so now in going back the other way they've had to press over all of the ministries of the Spirit of God for as he moved to bring them this way they must move against that motion of love in their turning from him.

What are you going to expect Satan to do in a situation like this when he sees the door open and the house swept isn't he going to break in and bind with cords twice as strong as they ever were before? He certainly will. You want to see the description of what happens to the apostate and why his bondage is so severe? Will you turn please to Hebrews chapter 6 and verses 4 to 6 Hebrews 6, 4 to 6. I want you to notice now the word impossible and the word repentance and what's in between. Verse 4 it says it is impossible.

In verse 6 it says to renew them again unto repentance. I want you to notice it didn't say it's impossible for them to be forgiven. It says the impossibility is not on the part of God's forgiveness the impossibility is to get them to repent.

It is impossible for those who were once enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the world to come if they shall fall away to renew them again unto repentance seeing they have crucified to themselves the Son of God afresh and put him to an open shame. Here we find something happening in the human spirit. Their bondage is as great as is their increased guilt because now there's something taking place in them.

Perhaps it is that having resisted the Spirit of God there's no ministry he can bring consistent with what he does to cause them to turn. They've given themselves over to a reprobate mind but in respect to their condemnation their guilt is greater their bondage is greater and so is their condemnation. In Matthew the 10th chapter and the 15th verse the Lord Jesus speaks of Chorazin and Bethsaida and he says if the mighty works had been done in Sodom and Gomorrah which were done in you Sodom and Gomorrah would have repented and it will be more tolerable for them Sodom and Gomorrah than it will be for you.

I think our Lord was trying to indicate that there were some degrees of punishment in this whether he was or not we can so interpret it but let it be known now that what he is the whole thrust of everything that Peter is saying is trying to warn you not to listen to teachers that will try to induce you to turn away from him not to give your mind over an acceptance of what you read in books that have as their intent even suggested or avowed to turn you away from Christ not to go into company and engage in that kind of conversation and communication that has as its end to dissuade you from following your Lord not to let any temporal advantage or seeming honor or position have the effect of inclining you to think about turning your heart away from Christ but rather to resist as you would the

plague to resist as you would every kind of vile disease and filthy attack upon your body every effort of the enemy to get you to think so much as a moment about turning your heart away from Christ but rather commit yourself to him and recognize that these teachers these leaders these who would influence your thought in your life have been raised up of satan for this express purpose to bring you into destruction lest you should become discouraged i want you to see in closing the inference here the lupiter is saying something absolutely wonderful wonderful by implication on his part an inference on ours we read in this 20th verse that everyone who comes to Jesus Christ in simple childlike faith can expect to escape the corruptions that are in the world to lust he's not called you to

failure he's not called you to apostasy he's not called you to this he's called you to himself he's called you to eternal life he's called you to walk in obedience he's called you to and with the call he's made every provision for you to do it but at the same time he sounds the warning in your heart saying whereas every provision has been made all that you need is available everything that will protect you is there the only thing that can incline you to walk in victory is to appropriate what's given and the only thing that can cause you to fall in defeat is to give heed to these seducing spirits these doctrines of devils the lies that have as their intent to destroy you wonderful therefore to realize that whereas there is seemingly there is taught in the scripture the possibility of

apostasy there is not to be implied by you or inferred by you for so much as a moment the necessity of apostasy julian the apostate was a young man of noble family in rome that early met some of the prominent christians and felt inclined to follow christ but through assassination and natural death julian became the heir to the throne of rome and became emperor of on the condition that he would repudiate his faith in christ rather than to pass the scepter on to the other successor that would have followed him and was eagerly waiting to take this honor julian chose to become emperor even at the cost of renouncing his faith in christ though ever seemingly desirous of being a friend of christian but one day in battle he was wounded mortally wounded he fell to the sand and then he felt that

all of his life had been this terrible mockery and loss that he had given up everything for nothing and lying there is so tradition in history tells us he reached down and took some of the sand that had been moistened with his ebbing blood clenched it into his fist and threw it again and said oh thou galilean thou hast conquered at last and so it will be with every apostate whatever it is that he gives up for jesus christ that he takes in the place of jesus christ is but for a moment and the son of god must conquer at last how wonderful it is to know therefore that you if do not know him can come tonight receive cleansing in his precious blood receive the provision for every day's need to keep you in the way of temptation and to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before

the presence of his glory with exceeding joy be warned as long as you walk there's a possibility of apostasy be encouraged there is no necessity shall we buy hearts together in prayer with our heads bowed our eyes closed and all the honesty that one day you're going to have at the judgment seat of christ do you recall when last it was you felt the way to which you'd been called was too hard and if you could but somehow just slip from the yoke of christ and the harness of the truth and make your own way unfettered untrammelled unhindered that life might be easier that you might prosper more your honors might be greater and quicker that you might have pleasure of the sort you see your fellows professing to have do you remember the pull you remember thou your heart inclined that way and you

look for so much as a moment longingly back toward leeks and garlics of egypt and remembered what were the good days and yet evil oh that somehow today if you remember the last time you grieved him the

last time you fell the last time there was in your heart the inclination to turn from this wonderful adorable lord it was to you then that peter speaks and he is saying to you beware be alert don't listen to wells without water clouds without rain slaves of iniquity who promise liberty and prosperity you've seen the king of kings and the lord of lords recognize the possibility of apostasy but oh turn your eyes upon the lord jesus the author and the finisher of your name commit yourself to him walk in obedience to him don't try to destroy the scripture don't try to arrest it don't try to

eliminate the possibility but commit yourself to jesus christ with a passionate longing to be found accepted in him at that day perhaps i speak to someone who does not know him oh what better time what finer time than this could there be none i say for you to open your heart and to invite jesus christ in right now where you are perhaps i speak to someone that has fallen away given heed to the lies backslidden from that place of fellowship once you know what better time to turn and return than tonight to your first love to the lord who gave himself for you wisdom dictates that the word can entreat you the spirit of god woos you tonight i wonder if there's those who by a braced hand would say pray for them god has truly found my heart and i do want to meet him in the light of what i've

heard returning to him for all his good way and purpose in my life would you raise your hand and be remembered thank you god bless you yes i see it thank you others anyway yes i see it god bless you still other anyway our father i know it's the hands that have been raised in the hearts these hands represent thou knowest oh god how longingly thou does draw how really thou does forgive and cleanse and protect and might it be tonight that these whose hands have been raised right where they are will see that fountain of cleansing will confess their sin today and will in the confession know forgiveness and cleansing and will with the cleansing commit themselves and rule french to him who is their lord resisting all the voices all the pressures all the teachers that would seek to move us from

this way of righteousness we ask the lord these hands are raised that thou would meet them in their need that they might know victory tomorrow the days that lie ahead through the finished work of jesus christ while we wait for this moment thought discipline silence if you feel your need can best be served by a time of prayer and counsel while every hair head is bowed and every eye closed why don't you slip from where you are go to my right in the little rome wilson chapel and i'll join you shortly there we can talk and pray together but wait for just a moment for any who might choose to do this you feel your need can best be served there and in this further time of prayer let us stand for the benediction now unto him who's able to keep us from falling and to present us faultless before

the presence of his glory with exceeding joy the only wise god our savior glory and honor dominion and majesty now and forever

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