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## 2 Peter and Jude

### Session 2

1) Abstract, 2) Briefing Document, 3) Study Guide, 4) FAQs

#### 1) Abstract:

This document provides a **detailed analysis of the biblical books of 2 Peter and Jude**, focusing on their shared themes and the scholarly consensus that 2 Peter likely utilized Jude as a source. The text **examines Peter's motivations for writing**, emphasizing his desire to offer a lasting reminder of apostolic teachings, particularly the certainty of Christ's return and God's judgment, as a defense against emerging false teachings. It **explores key supporting arguments**, such as the Transfiguration as eyewitness testimony to Jesus's glory and future coming, and historical precedents of divine judgment like the Flood and Sodom. The author also **contrasts genuine prophecy with false teachings**, highlighting the moral and theological deviations of the latter while affirming the reliability of inspired scripture. Ultimately, the discussion underscores **2 Peter's emphasis on righteous living** and perseverance in faith despite the challenges posed by these deceptive influences.

#### 2) Briefing Document:

Detailed Briefing Document: Main Themes and Key Ideas in 2 Peter and Jude

This briefing document reviews key themes and important ideas from the provided excerpts from Dr. David A. DeSilva's "2 Peter and Jude," Session 2. It highlights the author's purpose, the foundation of apostolic testimony, the nature of false teachers, and the implications for the audience.

##### 1. The Author's Purpose and Urgency

The author of 2 Peter, speaking through the voice of Peter, expresses a profound desire to provide his audience with a "perpetual resource" and "a reminder of certain key facets of the apostolic gospel" (p. 1). This is driven by Peter's imminent death, which he views as

"quickly drawing near, just as our Lord Jesus Christ disclosed to me" (p. 1). The letter, therefore, takes on "greater gravity as the last lecture" of the apostle (p. 1).

The core of this "last lecture" is "geared for the most part to secure the hearers in the certainty of the conviction of Christ's return and God's judgments against the revisions that certain skeptics would introduce into Christian faith" (p. 1). This highlights the urgency of the message, intended to keep the audience "on the right path after his death" (p. 1) and to counter prevalent challenges to the faith.

## 2. The Foundation of Apostolic Testimony: Eyewitness Experience

A central theme is the reliability and authority of apostolic testimony, which is "grounded in eyewitness experience of God's intervention in the world in Jesus Christ and not in human inventiveness" (p. 1). This directly refutes the "cleverly devised myths" (p. 1) of innovators.

The prime example given is Peter's eyewitness account of the **Transfiguration** (Mark 9:2ff, Matthew 7:1ff, Luke 9:28ff), where he, James, and John "were eyewitnesses of his magnificence" (p. 1). At this event, Jesus "received honor and glory from God the Father" and a voice from heaven proclaimed, "'This is my son, my beloved one, in whom I have been well pleased'" (p. 1).

- **Evidence of Jesus' Glory:** The Transfiguration is presented as a "proleptic experience of Jesus coming again as God's appointed end-time king and judge" (p. 2). It was a "glimpse of the glory that Jesus, the eternal Son, had had with the Father before his incarnation" and "the glory that Jesus would have not just on the far side of his resurrection, but on the far side of his ascension, and ultimately at his coming again as Lord and judge" (p. 2). This resonates with Psalm 8:5-6, "You crown him with glory and honor. You put all things under his feet" (p. 2).
- **Affirmation of Prophetic Word:** For the apostles, this event "made the prophetic word more certain" (p. 3). The author urges his audience to "hold on to that which the prophetic word announces as a future certainty" (p. 3), particularly Christ's return to "judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end" (p. 3).
- **Reliability of Scripture:** This leads to a discussion of prophetic words in Scripture: "no prophetic word in scripture came about by a person's own invention, for no prophetic word was ever conveyed by a human being's will, but people carried along by the Holy Spirit spoke from God" (p. 3). This emphasizes the divine inspiration and accuracy of scriptural prophecies, contrasting them with the "murky circumstances" of Greco-Roman oracles like Delphi (p. 3-4).

## 3. The Threat of False Teachers and Their Characteristics

The letter warns about "false prophets among the people, even as there will also be false teachers among you who will introduce destructive opinions, even denying the master who bought them, bringing swift destruction down upon themselves" (p. 4). These false teachers are depicted as a present danger, actively "slandering the way of truth" (p. 4) and exhibiting specific problematic characteristics:

- **Denial of Judgment/Christ's Return:** A key issue is their "denial of God's commitment to judge, and thus, the conviction that Christ would return as Lord and judge" (p. 5). This practical denial of Christ's lordship had severe "practical consequences," freeing them "from concern about divine rewards and punishment" to pursue "one's own pleasure and ends now" (p. 5).
- **Immoral Conduct and Self-Indulgence:** The author strongly links their character to their practices, suggesting that an individual's "moral character and practice go a long way toward answering the question, is the prophet serving God's desires or using his or her influence to serve his or her own desires, often in very materialistic and sensual ways?" (p. 4). They are described as:
  - "Shamelessly self-indulgent" (p. 4).
  - "Covetously traffic with you with fabricated messages" (p. 4).
  - "Presumptuous and arrogant persons" who "do not shudder to slander glorious beings" (p. 7).
  - Acting "like beasts without reason that operate on instinct" (p. 7).
  - Indulging in "banqueting in the daytime to be a pleasure, blots and blemishes reveling in their tricks as they feast together with you" (p. 7).
  - "Ever on the lookout for an adulteress, never resting from sin, enticing unstable souls, having hearts well exercised in greed" (p. 7).
- **Following Balaam's Way:** They are likened to Balaam, who "loved the reward of wrongdoing" (p. 7). This comparison highlights their spiritual blindness, as Balaam "was blind to the dangers that lie right before them on the road, the impending judgment of God that they themselves deny" (p. 8).
- **False Promise of Freedom & Actual Slavery:** These teachers "speaking empty, haughty things, they entice with shameless desires of the flesh those who are actually escaping from those who conduct themselves in error. While promising them freedom, they are themselves slaves of corruption" (p. 8-9). This contrasts with the Greco-Roman philosophical ideal of "genuine freedom," which is "the ability

not to be driven in one or another direction by one's emotions, cravings, or physical sensations" (p. 9). The false teachers, by contrast, are "being driven by one's lower desires into shameful behaviors" (p. 9).

- **Worse Than Ignorance:** The author argues that those who, "after knowing God's favor, refuse it and the holiness to which God calls us in favor of self-serving practices" are in a "worse state than those who have never experienced Christ's benefits" (p. 9). This is likened to a "dog returning to its own vomit and a pig cleaned up to wallow in the mud" (p. 10), illustrating the self-defeating and deplorable nature of their reversion.

#### 4. God's Certain Judgment and Deliverance

Against the false teachers' denial of judgment, 2 Peter affirms God's consistent intervention to judge unrighteousness and rescue the righteous:

- **Historical Precedents of Judgment:** The author revisits "episodes from sacred history that demonstrate otherwise" (p. 6), particularly:
  - The destruction of "angels who sinned, but consigning them to Tartarus in chains of darkness, handed them over to be kept for judgment" (p. 6).
  - The "destruction of the ancient world and its inhabitants in the flood" (p. 6).
  - The "conflagration of Sodom" (p. 6). These examples "prove God's concern with human injustice and God's commitment to intervene to bring it to an end" and serve as "historical precedents in support of the Jewish scriptural and apostolic conviction that God will intervene again in the future to judge all unrighteousness and eliminate it from God's new creation" (p. 6).
- **Historical Precedents of Deliverance:** Crucially, the author also introduces "the positive counterparts to these episodes of judgment," namely:
  - The deliverance of "the eight who belonged to Noah, the preacher of righteousness" from the flood (p. 6).
  - The deliverance of "righteous Lot who was grieved by the shameless conduct of the lawless" from Sodom (p. 6). This "double emphasis" serves to both undermine the false teachers and "promote the audience's ongoing commitment to pursuing righteousness" (p. 6). Noah is specifically highlighted as a "preacher of righteousness" (p. 7), reminding the audience of their "duty...to bear witness to God's righteousness and to invite their neighbors to safety in the face of God's judgment" (p. 7).

- **Judgment is Not Sluggish:** The author explicitly counters the Epicurean idea of delayed divine judgment, stating that "the personified judgment of these rival teachers is neither lazy nor nodding off" (p. 5). If judgment is delayed, "it is for one purpose alone, to make room for them to repent" (p. 5).

## 5. Ethical Implications for the Audience

The certainty of Christ's return and God's judgment has direct implications for the audience's conduct:

- **Holy Conduct and Reverent Piety:** Given that "all these things are thus slated for destruction, what kind of people then are you obliged to be, awaiting and hastening the coming of the day of God in holy conduct and reverent piety?" (p. 3). This emphasizes that faith is not merely intellectual assent but must "shape our entire life" (p. 3).
- **Protecting the Reputation of the Faith:** The author expresses concern for the "impact of such pleasure-seeking on the reputation of the Christian group" (p. 5). Christians should not be reproached for "immoral or overtly subversive behavior" but only for "virtuous" causes like "their commitment to the only God who is, and to the coming kingdom of their Lord Jesus Christ" (p. 5).
- **Living in Line with Cleansing:** Having "known the redemption and the new life that Christ has provided" carries "the obligation so to live now as to show that we know and honor the value of what we have been given" (p. 10). This means "consistently living along the trajectory that our cleansing from past sins for the righteousness that will find a home in the kingdom of God's beloved Son has set us on" (p. 10).

## 6. Relationship to Jude

The document highlights the significant scholarly consensus that the author of 2 Peter utilizes Jude as a source:

- **Shared Themes:** "It is also at this point in the letter that we begin to hear clear echoes of the letter of Jude, which continue through the end of chapter 2" (p. 4). Both address "innovative interlopers who seek to modify the apostolic gospel for their own ends" (p. 4), particularly regarding "the innovators' infiltration of the congregations and introduction of destructive teachings, the denial of Christ's lordship in some sense, and the fact that the condemnation of such people was announced long ago" (p. 5).
- **Adaptation, Not Slavish Use:** While 2 Peter uses Jude's "progression of topics," it is "not used slavishly, but adapted heavily to suit both an audience with a very

different cultural heritage and a rival message with a significantly different focus" (p. 4).

- **Omissions in 2 Peter:** 2 Peter notably omits certain elements from Jude, such as "Jude's mention of the Exodus generation" (p. 6), "the strange episode of the angelic dispute over Moses' corpse" (p. 7), and the "recitation of 1 Enoch, verse 9" (p. 7). These omissions likely reflect 2 Peter's audience's "lack of familiarity with such works and traditions" (p. 7), particularly if they were "far removed from extra-canonical works and traditions that had currency in Palestine" (p. 7).

In conclusion, the provided source reveals 2 Peter as an urgent and authoritative address from a dying apostle, aimed at grounding his audience in the certainty of Christ's return and God's judgment. It powerfully defends apostolic testimony as eyewitness truth against "cleverly devised myths" and exposes the moral bankruptcy and false promises of innovative false teachers. The letter serves as both a stern warning against apostasy and a powerful call to live a life of holiness and righteousness, reflecting the genuine freedom offered by the gospel.

### 3) Study Guide:

Study Guide: 2 Peter and Jude - Session 2

#### I. Overview of 2 Peter's Purpose and Urgency

- **Peter's Goals for the Letter:** To provide a "perpetual resource" and "reminder" of key facets of the apostolic gospel, helping the audience stay on the "right path" after his death.
- **Urgency due to Peter's Impending Death:** The author views the letter as Peter's "last lecture," made urgent by the anticipation of his "departure" or death, possibly recalling John 21 or another revelation.
- **Central Convictions to Secure:** The letter aims to secure the hearers in the certainty of Christ's return and God's judgments, specifically against "skeptics" and "innovators" who challenge Christian faith.

#### II. The Grounding of Apostolic Testimony: Eyewitness Experience

- **Contrast with Human Inventiveness:** Apostolic testimony is reliable because it's "grounded in eyewitness experience of God's intervention in the world in Jesus Christ," not in "cleverly devised myths."

- **The Transfiguration as Eyewitness Proof: Biblical Accounts:** Referenced from Mark 9:2+, Matthew 7:1+, and Luke 9:28+.
- **Participants:** Jesus, Peter, James, and John.
- **Key Elements:** Jesus' transfiguration (dazzling white clothes), appearance of Elijah and Moses, a cloud overshadowing them, and a voice from the cloud declaring, "This is my son, the beloved, listen to him."
- **Aristotelian Argumentation:** Presented as "strong proof" because it's eyewitness testimony, something the speaker did not have to invent.
- **Glimpse of Jesus' Glory:** Peter, James, and John saw the glory Jesus had with the Father before incarnation, and the glory he would have post-resurrection, ascension, and at his second coming as Lord and judge.
- **Connections to Other Visions:** This glorified Christ is linked to Paul's encounter on the road to Damascus and John's vision on Patmos (Revelation).
- **Theological Resonances: Psalm 8:5-6:** "You crown him with glory and honor; you put all things under his feet." Originally celebrating humankind's privileges, early Christians saw it hinting at Jesus as the "Son of Man."
- **Psalm 2:7:** "You are my son; today I have begotten you." A royal psalm celebrating the Davidic king, read as a prophetic word about the Messiah, who would receive nations as his inheritance and rule with a "rod of iron."
- **Proleptic Experience of Christ's Return:** The author, like Mark, understands the transfiguration as a "visionary experience of Jesus at his second coming," making the prophetic word "more certain."
- **Implication for Christian Life:** This conviction (Christ's return and judgment) should "shape our entire life," leading to "holy conduct and reverent piety."

### III. The Reliability of Prophetic Word

- **Affirmation of Scriptural Prophecy (2 Peter 1:20-21):** "No prophetic word in scripture came about by a person's own invention, for no prophetic word was ever conveyed by a human being's will, but people carried along by the Holy Spirit spoke from God."
- **Not Private Interpretation:** The text is not primarily a warning against private interpretation but an affirmation of the prophet's "accurate understanding and expression" of divine revelation.

- **Contrast with Greco-Roman Oracles:** Unlike ambiguous oracles (e.g., Delphi) where human misunderstanding was possible, scriptural prophetic words had "no margin for error or misunderstanding" because the Holy Spirit "carried the prophets along."

#### IV. Distinguishing Genuine from False Prophets/Teachers

- **Existence of False Teachers:** Foretold and present among the audience, introducing "destructive opinions," "denying the master who bought them," and engaging in "shamelessly self-indulgent practices."
- **Criteria for Discernment: Moral Character and Practice:** Do they serve God's desires or their own (materialistic, sensual)?
- **Consonance with Tradition:** Do their teachings align with the established tradition of genuine prophets (Old Testament) and "spirit-inspired apostles"? Paul and 1 John agree on this criterion.
- **Connection to Jude:** Clear echoes of Jude's letter (especially Jude 4), suggesting 2 Peter's author used Jude as a resource, adapting it for a different audience and rival message.
- **Shared Topics:** Innovators' infiltration, destructive teachings, denial of Christ's lordship, announced condemnation.
- **2 Peter's Emphasis on Denial of Judgment:** For 2 Peter, the denial of Christ's lordship often stems from a denial of God's commitment to judge, leading to practical consequences of pleasure-seeking.
- **Concern for Christian Reputation:** False teachers' immoral behavior slanders "the way of truth."
- **Divine Judgment is Certain:** The author refutes the idea of delayed judgment (Epicurean thought) by affirming that God's judgment is "neither lazy nor nodding off." Any delay is for repentance.
- **Historical Precedents for Judgment: The Flood:** Destruction of the ancient world.
- **Sodom and Gomorrah:** Conflagration and ruin.
- **Transgressing Angels:** Consigned to Tartarus.
- **Aristotelian Logic:** "The future resembles the past." These precedents make the confession "Christ will come again" credible.

- **Positive Counterparts (Deliverance of the Righteous): Noah and his family:** Delivered from the flood. Noah is called a "preacher of righteousness" (a Second Temple tradition, not explicitly in Genesis). This emphasizes the duty to bear witness.
- **Lot:** Rescued from Sodom.
- **Dual Emphasis:** Undermining false teachers AND promoting audience's commitment to righteousness for deliverance.

#### V. Denunciation of False Teachers' Character and Practices

- **Vituperation of Character:** "Presumptuous and arrogant persons," "blots and blemishes," "children of a curse."
- **Slandering "Glorious Beings":** Unclear meaning, possibly denying angelic authority, which aligns with denying God's involvement in human affairs. The author avoids Jude's specific reference to the dispute over Moses' corpse, possibly due to audience unfamiliarity with extra-canonical works.
- **Operating like "Brute Animals":** Undermines their "philosophical pretensions." Driven by instinct, ignorance, and destined for destruction.
- **Examples of Immoral Behavior: Self-Indulgent Indolence:** Feasting and drinking during daylight hours, seen as degenerate (Isaiah, Testament of Moses).
- **Sexual Immorality/Lust:** "Ever on the lookout for an adulteress," "eye full of an adulteress" (referencing Greek proverb about "maidens" in the eyes).
- **Greed/Acquisitiveness:** "Hearts well exercised in greed."
- **Following Balaam's Way:** They "loved the reward of wrongdoing," similar to Balaam who was rebuked by a donkey. This implies they are blind to impending danger/judgment despite pretending divine knowledge. (2 Peter omits Jude's references to Cain and Korah).

#### VI. The Danger of Apostasy and True Freedom

- **Worse State Than Before:** Those who "turn back to embrace facets of that life from which [Christ] redeemed us" are in a "worse state than those who have never experienced Christ's benefits."
- **"Waterless Springs" and "Mists driven by Gales":** They offer nothing substantial, are unreliable, and are destined for "gloom of darkness."

- **False Promise of Freedom:** They "promise freedom" but are "themselves slaves of corruption," driven by desires and passions.
- **Genuine Freedom vs. Slavery:** **Genuine Freedom:** The ability "not to be driven... by one's emotions, cravings, or physical sensations." Freedom "not to be coerced into performing any base or vicious act."
- **Genuine Slavery:** Being "driven by one's lower desires into shameful behaviors contrary to the universally prized ideals of justice, courage, wisdom, and temperance."
- **Consequences of Rejecting God's Grace:** To "spurn God's gracious provisions of life and piety" is a far worse offense than never knowing them, entailing an intentional "value judgment" against God.
- **Echoes of Jesus' Sayings and Proverbs: Matthew 12:43-45 (Unclean Spirit):** "The last state of that person is worse than the first." Applied to those delivered by Christ who return to old ways.
- **Proverbs (Dog to Vomit, Pig to Mud):** Illustrates the self-defeating nature of returning to unwholesome practices after "cleansing from past sins."
- **Obligation of the Cleansed:** Having "tasted and seen that the Lord is good," Christians are obligated to live "along the trajectory" of righteousness, showing they "know and honor the value of what [they] have been given."

Quiz: 2 Peter and Jude - Session 2

**Instructions:** Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. What is the primary reason for the urgency of the letter of 2 Peter, according to the author?
2. How does the author of 2 Peter distinguish the apostolic testimony about Jesus from "cleverly devised myths"?
3. Name two specific events or figures that appeared with Jesus during the Transfiguration, as described in the Synoptic Gospels and recalled in 2 Peter.
4. Explain how the author of 2 Peter uses Psalm 2 in connection with the Transfiguration.
5. According to 2 Peter 1:20-21, what is the crucial factor that ensures the reliability of genuine prophetic words in Scripture?

6. List two main criteria suggested by the author of 2 Peter for discerning between genuine and false prophets/teachers.
7. Why does the author of 2 Peter omit Jude's mention of the "angelic dispute over Moses' corpse" and 1 Enoch 9?
8. How does 2 Peter characterize the self-indulgent practices of the false teachers, particularly regarding their feasting habits?
9. According to 2 Peter, what is the fundamental difference between the "freedom" promised by the false teachers and "genuine freedom"?
10. What two proverbs or sayings are used at the end of the second chapter to describe the state of those who turn away from the "way of righteousness" after having known it?

#### Quiz Answer Key: 2 Peter and Jude - Session 2

1. The primary reason for the letter's urgency is the apostle Peter's impending death. He views this letter as his "last lecture," intended to provide a lasting resource and reminder for his audience after he is no longer personally available to guide them.
2. The author distinguishes apostolic testimony by stating it is "grounded in eyewitness experience of God's intervention in the world in Jesus Christ." This contrasts sharply with human inventiveness or "cleverly devised myths," emphasizing the verifiable nature of their claims.
3. During the Transfiguration, as recalled in 2 Peter, Elijah and Moses appeared with Jesus. These figures represent the Law and the Prophets, signifying the fulfillment of God's covenant history in Christ.
4. The author uses Psalm 2, a royal psalm celebrating the Davidic king, to interpret the divine pronouncement at the Transfiguration, "This is my son, my beloved one." This psalm came to be read prophetically of the Messiah, promising he would receive the nations and rule them, which 2 Peter connects to Jesus' role as God's appointed end-time king and judge.
5. According to 2 Peter 1:20-21, the crucial factor is that prophets were "carried along by the Holy Spirit" when they spoke from God. This ensures that the prophetic word did not come about by human invention or will, guaranteeing its accuracy and reliability.
6. Two main criteria for discerning between genuine and false prophets/teachers are their moral character and practice, and their consonance with the established

tradition of genuine prophets and apostles. False teachers serve their own desires, while genuine ones align with God's will and consistent apostolic teaching.

7. The author of 2 Peter omits these references likely due to his audience's lack of familiarity with such extra-canonical works and traditions, which had currency mainly in Palestine. Including them might have been confusing rather than advantageous for a congregation in the Pauline and Petrine mission overlap area.
8. The false teachers' self-indulgent practices are characterized by "banqueting in the daytime" and being "reveling in their tricks as they feast." This "self-indulgent indolence" during daylight hours was considered degenerate, contrasting with proper conduct.
9. The false teachers promised a "freedom" that was actually a "slavery of corruption," allowing them to indulge in their desires and passions. Genuine freedom, in contrast, is the ability to not be driven by one's emotions or cravings, and to avoid performing base or vicious acts.
10. The two proverbs used are "a dog returning to its own vomit" and "a pig cleaned up to wallow in the mud." These maxims illustrate the self-defeating and regressive nature of returning to unwholesome or unrighteous practices after having experienced God's cleansing and grace.

#### Essay Questions: 2 Peter and Jude - Session 2

1. Discuss how the author of 2 Peter uses the Transfiguration narrative to combat the "skeptics" and "innovators" in his audience. How does this event function as both eyewitness testimony and a "proleptic experience" of Christ's return, and what theological resonances (e.g., Psalm 8, Psalm 2) does it evoke to support his argument?
2. Analyze the author's argument for the reliability of genuine prophetic words in 2 Peter 1:20-21. How does this affirmation function within the broader context of his concerns about false teachers, and how does he implicitly contrast genuine prophecy with the "murky circumstances" of Greco-Roman oracles?
3. Compare and contrast the portrayal of false teachers in 2 Peter with the general characteristics found in the letter of Jude, particularly in terms of shared topics and 2 Peter's specific modifications. What additional concerns or emphases does 2 Peter introduce regarding these interlopers?
4. Examine the various ways the author of 2 Peter attempts to "undermine the rival teachers' philosophical pretensions." Discuss his arguments against their moral

character and practices, drawing on specific examples (e.g., feasting, lust, Balaam), and explain how these portrayals serve to discredit their claims and influence.

5. Discuss the concept of "genuine freedom" versus "slavery" as presented in 2 Peter, particularly in relation to the false teachers' promises and practices. How does the author utilize philosophical concepts (e.g., Philo, Diocrystus) and proverbial sayings to illustrate the severe consequences of turning away from the "way of righteousness" after having known it?

#### Glossary of Key Terms: 2 Peter and Jude - Session 2

- **Apostolic Gospel:** The core message and teachings delivered by the apostles, understood by the author of 2 Peter as the true, foundational faith.
- **Transfiguration:** A pivotal event in the Synoptic Gospels where Jesus' appearance was transformed, and he was revealed in glory to Peter, James, and John, accompanied by Moses and Elijah.
- **Eyewitness Testimony:** A form of "strong proof" in argumentation, according to Aristotle, based on direct observation. The author of 2 Peter presents the Transfiguration as such a testimony to establish the reliability of the apostolic message.
- **Proleptic Experience:** An experience that foreshadows or anticipates a future event. The author of 2 Peter views the Transfiguration as a proleptic experience of Jesus' second coming as Lord and Judge.
- **Psalms 8 and 2:** A psalm celebrating the dignity and dominion granted to humankind, interpreted by early Christians as also hinting at Jesus, particularly as the "Son of Man."  
 • **Psalms 8 and 2:** A royal psalm celebrating the Davidic king's divine favor, interpreted by early Christians as a prophetic word concerning the Messiah, who would rule the nations.
- **Prophetic Word (Scriptural):** Divine messages conveyed through prophets and recorded in Scripture, affirmed by 2 Peter to be inspired by the Holy Spirit and free from human error or invention.
- **False Prophets/Teachers:** Individuals who arose (and continue to arise) among God's people, introducing destructive opinions, denying core tenets of faith, and engaging in self-serving practices.

- **Innovators:** A term used to describe the false teachers who sought to modify or revise the established apostolic gospel for their own ends.
- **Denial of Christ's Lordship:** In 2 Peter, this is linked not just to practice, but particularly to the rival teachers' denial of God's commitment to judge, and thus of Christ's return as Lord and Judge.
- **Epicurus/Epicurean School:** An ancient Greek philosophy that, among other things, taught that the gods do not concern themselves with human affairs, and thus, divine judgment was not a concern. The false teachers' alleged denial of judgment echoes this.
- **Tartarus:** In Greek mythology, a deep abyss used as a dungeon of torment and suffering for the wicked. In 2 Peter, it is where angels who sinned are consigned for judgment.
- **Noah (Preacher of Righteousness):** In 2 Peter, Noah is depicted not just as a survivor of the flood but as one who proclaimed righteousness, a tradition expanded in Second Temple Jewish literature beyond the Genesis narrative.
- **Lot:** Righteous individual rescued from the destruction of Sodom, serving as another example of God's deliverance of the pious amidst judgment.
- **Glorious Beings:** Unspecified spiritual entities that the false teachers are accused of slandering, possibly angels or other divine authorities.
- **Balaam:** A prophet from the Old Testament (Numbers 22) who loved "the reward of wrongdoing" and was rebuked by his own donkey. He serves as an example of a false prophet driven by greed.
- **Genuine Freedom:** As described in 2 Peter, the ability to not be coerced or driven by one's lower desires (emotions, cravings) into shameful behaviors; freedom to live according to virtuous ideals.
- **Genuine Slavery:** The opposite of genuine freedom; being controlled or driven by one's desires and passions into behaviors contrary to universally prized ideals like justice, courage, wisdom, and temperance.

## 4) FAQs:

How does the author of 2 Peter emphasize the urgency and perpetual importance of his message?

The author of 2 Peter, speaking as the apostle Peter, highlights the urgency of his message by stating his impending death ("the putting off of my tent is quickly drawing near"). This makes the letter a "last lecture" of great gravity. To ensure the message's perpetual relevance after his departure, he aims to provide a "perpetual resource" – a reminder of the core apostolic gospel and faith. This resource is designed to keep the audience on the "right path" by grounding them in the certainty of Christ's return and God's judgments, especially in the face of skeptical challenges.

What is the primary evidence offered by the author to support the apostolic testimony, and how is it presented?

The author presents the Transfiguration of Jesus as the primary evidence supporting the apostolic testimony. This event is offered as "eyewitness testimony," which, according to Aristotle, is one of the strongest forms of proof because it is not invented. Peter, James, and John "caught a glimpse of the glory that Jesus, the eternal Son, had had with the Father before his incarnation" and would have after his resurrection, ascension, and ultimate return as Lord and judge. The divine voice declaring, "This is my son, my beloved one, in whom I have been well pleased," further underscores Jesus' unique honor and glory, echoing Old Testament prophecies in Psalms 8 and 2, which point to Jesus as God's appointed king and judge.

How does the author connect the Transfiguration to the future return of Christ and its implications for believers?

The author views the Transfiguration as a "proleptic experience" of Jesus' second coming as God's appointed end-time king and judge. This interpretation aligns with Mark's Gospel, where Jesus' statement about some not tasting death before seeing "the kingdom of God coming in glory" is immediately followed by the Transfiguration. For Peter, James, and John, this event made the "prophetic word more certain." The author intends for this recollection of apostolic testimony to instill the same conviction in his audience, urging them to "hold on to that which the prophetic word announces as a future certainty." This conviction is not merely intellectual but is meant to "shape our entire life," encouraging believers to live in "holy conduct and reverent piety" as they anticipate Christ's "cataclysmic coming."

What is the author's understanding of genuine prophetic words in Scripture, and how does this contrast with other prophetic practices of the time?

The author asserts that "no prophetic word in scripture came about by a person's own invention, for no prophetic word was ever conveyed by a human being's will, but people carried along by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." This signifies an accurate and reliable understanding and expression of divine revelation by the prophets, whether through ecstatic experience, dreams, visions, or hearing the divine voice. This contrasts sharply with Greco-Roman prophetic practices, such as the oracle at Delphi, where pronouncements were often ambiguous and subject to human interpretation, potentially misleading. The author emphasizes that in biblical prophecy, "there was no margin for error or misunderstanding" because the Holy Spirit guided the prophets to speak and write "precisely what God intended."

How does the author identify and describe false prophets/teachers, and what are their characteristics?

The author warns that "false teachers" will arise, similar to false prophets in the past, introducing "destructive opinions" and even "denying the master who bought them." Their characteristics include "shamelessly self-indulgent practices," "covetously traffic[ing] with you with fabricated messages," and living motivated by "greed" and "sensual ways." They are described as "presumptuous and arrogant persons" who "slander glorious beings." Furthermore, they are "waterless springs and mists driven by gales," offering nothing substantial, and are "slaves of corruption" while promising others freedom. Their moral character and actions reveal their true nature, as they pursue their own desires rather than God's.

What specific Old Testament examples does the author use to refute the false teachers' denial of divine judgment?

To refute the false teachers' assertion that God does not intervene to judge and punish, the author revisits episodes from sacred history. He cites the "destruction of the ancient world and its inhabitants in the flood" and the "conflagration of Sodom" as historical examples. These serve as "historical precedents" demonstrating "God's concern with human injustice and God's commitment to intervene to bring it to an end." Importantly, he also highlights the positive counterparts to these judgments: the deliverance of Noah and his family from the flood, and the deliverance of Lot from Sodom. This "double emphasis" underscores both God's judgment of the unrighteous and His protection of the righteous.

How does the author define true freedom and slavery, and how do the false teachers embody false freedom?

The author aligns with philosophical thought that genuine freedom is not merely licensed to do whatever one desires, nor is genuine slavery a matter of social status. Instead,

"genuine freedom is the ability not to be driven in one or another direction by one's emotions, cravings, or physical sensations," enabling one to avoid "any base or vicious act by any impulse." Conversely, "genuine slavery" is being "driven by one's lower desires into shameful behaviors contrary to the universally prized ideals of justice, courage, wisdom, and temperance." The false teachers embody false freedom because, while promising liberty, they are "slaves of corruption," driven by their "shameless desires of the flesh" and passions. They have "forfeited the genuine freedom that the gospel was intended to bring."

What is the danger for those who follow the false teachers, and why is their condition worse than those who never knew the truth?

The author warns that those who follow the false teachers face a significant risk, stating that their "latter condition has become worse than the former." This is not a return to square one; rather, "it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having come to know it, to turn away again from the holy commandment handed down to them." He uses the sayings of Jesus (Matthew 12:43-45) about an unclean spirit returning with seven worse spirits and proverbs comparing them to "a dog returning to its own vomit and a pig cleaned up to wallow in the mud." This emphasizes that to spurn God's gracious provisions and depart from the path of righteousness after having experienced Christ's benefits is a "far worse offense" because it entails an intentional rejection of the value of what they have been given.