

# Church

## Sunday School lesson

# Peter's first epistle offered hope to the Romans

### A HOPE WORTH WAITING FOR (2 Peter 3:1-13)

"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness; but is long suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9).

Peter's first epistle written to the Christians in the Roman provinces of Asia Minor, about A.D. 67, served to give them hope and to strengthen them against the persecution of Nero's Rome. Peter's second epistle, from which our lesson for today is taken, was written to warn Christians against false teachers and false teaching.

Has there ever been a time during the Christians period of history when Christians have not been the object of those who misrepresent? The very principles which govern the actions of a Christian's life make them susceptible to ever present devilish rogues.

Our lesson today deals with the coming of Christ in judgement, with relief and glory for His suffering saints. On that day, all wrongs will be made right, and each person will give an account of his life. God's judgement will be absolute.

### BELIEVERS REMEMBER THE HOPE (2 Peter 3:1-2)

Peter could not have known personally all of the Christians to whom he addressed his letters. Yet, he knew that the Gospel of

Christ had to be kept pure and undefiled. He further realized that the words of caution, which Jesus had passed to His disciples earlier concerning wolves which would move in on the sheep, must be taken seriously.

Peter calls them to remember the purity of Christ's Gospel when it was given to them. It must be kept pure, not mixed with false teaching. Peter set forth the means by which people would be able to accurately judge what was pure and what was false.

He refers them to two groups of messengers. First were the Holy Prophets—men who spoke God's message to the people as God moved them to speak. God inspired them. What they said was true because it came directly from God, Who is the source of all truth.

Second, he referred them to the group of Apostles. This select group, chosen by Christ, taught by Christ, inspired by Christ and empowered by Christ. They were to make disciples of all nations, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." (Matthew 28:19-20)

What better way to discern the truth than through the men who walked the earth with Christ Himself.

### UNBELIEVERS REJECT THE HOPE (2 Peter 3:3-7)

At the time that Peter wrote this epistle he had aged and knew that his remaining time was short. He was most anxious that the truths of the Gospel be firmly fixed in the minds of the believers.

He was very concerned about the apostasy, the falling away and denying of the truths, which was creeping into segments of believers. (See Peter 2) Specifically in verse 4, Peter is referring to those who scoffed at the doctrine of Christ's second coming.

The hope of Christian believers rests on the very truth that Christ is coming again to gather His church from earth. The unbelievers were attempting to lead the believers away from this hope. Peter is saying that those who do this are "walking after their own lusts." Their vision is limited; they are acting for reasons of personal gain.

### GOD REASSURES OF THE HOPE THE FAITHFUL RESPOND TO THE HOPE. (2 Peter 3:8-13)

Particularly during the first century, many Christians were expecting Christ's imminent return. They expected the "day of the Lord" to happen in their life time. Peter reassures the believers that Christ will come but it will be according to His timetable.

In the meantime, they may rest confidently in His promises because they are sure and true. Peter gives a glimpse of what "that day" will be like—it will be awesome. The heavens and the earth shall melt with fervent heat—the earth and it's works

will be burned up. Only Godly people will be saved. "Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." (2 Peter 3:13) (Lesson based on the International Sunday School Lessons)

## Church News

### Sermon topic selected

The First Baptist Church Sunday school begins at 9:45 a.m. Morning worship starts at 11:00 a.m. The Rev. J.H. London is preaching from the subject "Love: A Visible Ether" I Corinthians 13:4-7. The Senior Choir is singing under the direction of Barbara

Shannon, organist. The Perquimans County Fellowship Union Meeting at the Bay Branch AME Zion Church, Belvidere community. The Rev. J. W. Law and Milton Grove Baptist Church is in charge, Rev. J.H. London, Jr., president. The public is invited to attend.

### Women's Aglow to meet

The Elizabeth City Chapter of Women's Aglow meets Saturday, March 15, 9:00 a.m. at Virginia Dare House on McMorrine Street. The Rev. Roger Gauthier, Jr., youth pastor of the Pentecos-

tal Holiness Church will be our guest speaker. A brunch will be served. This meeting is open to the public. For more information, call 330-2647.

## Tips on saving more income

When it comes to money, more and more of us are saving less and less. Take last year for ex-

ample. Last year we saved less than three percent of our after tax income. Part of the reason might be that we were using 20 percent of our after tax income. Part of the reason might be that we were using 20 percent of that after tax income to pay off installment debts.



By Paige Underwood



north carolina AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE

So what about the future? What can you and I do to become more financially secure? Well, face it, we're just going to have to put more of our current income aside.

Let me pass on some advice I got from a financial specialist. She suggests setting aside an amount equal to six months' take-home pay for an emergency fund. And after you have that fund in place, squirrel away additional money for future wants and needs.

Try to save ten percent of each pay check. But don't wait until the end of the month to do it. Instead pay yourself first. And consider that payment a regular obligation. You might have the business office deduct money from your paycheck and transfer it to your savings account. That way you'll get in the habit of living off the remaining income.

Here are some other things you might try. If you get a salary increase, a gift, or an income tax refund, put it into savings. If you pay off a debt, take the amount of money you used to set aside for that payment—and save it. Another thing you might try. Every other month, give up some luxuries, take the money you save and add it to the family kitty. You'll find that giving up something today means having more tomorrow.

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## Deadly Diseases of Church Folks

Reverend Henry Bizzell, Pastor

Hertford United Methodist Church

Market Street

Hertford, N.C.

We ought to be concerned about the health of the churches and church folks.

What is a disease? "Webster's International Unabridged Dictionary" gives the following definition: "Disease: A condition which impairs any or all of the natural or regular functions of the body - any disordered or depraved condition or element: moral, social, or political." The last half of the definition is especially appropriate to the intention of this article.

A diseased church person is one whose functions as a member of the church is in a state of disorder or depravity. Here is a list of some diseases which afflict church folks:

- 1) Sunday Sleeping Sickness - This is a peculiar disease. It erupts only on Sunday. The person affected functions normally every day except Sunday. Then he is laid low. Every other day he may rise as early as 6:30 or 7:00 a.m., but on Sunday is absolutely unable to get up until too late for Sunday School or Church Worship. Very strangely, the disorder begins to wear off soon after 11:00 a.m. and he/she is able to carry on an accelerated schedule of activity - golf, boating, family outings, work in the yard, etc.
- 2) Spectatoritis - Now, I like to watch others play football, baseball, soccer, etc. I cannot play the sports - never could. However, I like to watch others play. I am a spectator, not a participant. Spectatoritis is a disease deadly to church folks. Come and sit - never become a part of the game. Others are responsible for the action: the choir, the preacher, etc. Preachers work just one hour each week. Everyone else just dresses up, comes, and sits. Somehow, the congregation is to be "spoonfed" - pour in the spiritual nourishment. What a deadly disease!
- 3) Schizophrenia - The Divided Self - This is a wide-spread disease of

church folks. There are our jobs, our families, our civic involvements, clubs, sports, recreation, social lives, and there is our church. All of these compete for our attention - pull on us, divide us. The church is only one among many "pulls" on our lives. Frequently, the church gets only what is leftover! This is a deadly disease of church folks - Schizophrenia.

- 4) Poor Vision - Who is more impaired than the individual who cannot see, the individual who must feel his way in the dark? Poor vision may be the result of ignorance, or pride, or prejudice. When people can see and know about themselves and their relation to God and their relation to other persons, then they can function with vigor and strength.
- 5) Hypersensitivity - Those afflicted wear their "feelings on their sleeves", "have a chip on their shoulder" and are always "up in the miff tree." This is a deadly

disease of church folks.

- 6) Heart Trouble - This is the real disease, the basic problem. When the heart is strong and healthy, when it is right, we can overcome the other ailments. A heart warmed by the welcomed presence of God can overcome all the problems. The first five diseases we have mentioned are symptoms of the real disease - heart trouble. When the heart of the individual belongs to God, we can cope with all the other problems.

Good health to you!

This message brought to you by the following businesses.

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## Cards of Thanks

The family of the late John A. Webb, Jr. would like to thank everyone for all acts of kindness rendered them in their time of sorrow. May God bless all of you.  
Mrs. Mary E. Foster and family

I wish to thank each and every one for the prayers, the cards and flowers sent to me while I was in the Albemarle Hospital. I especially wish to thank Martha Smith, Becky White, and Maude Ellis for their extra kindness shown. God Bless each one.  
Myrtle Lamb

We would like to thank every one for the support you gave while Myrtle Lee White was in the hospital. Your thoughts, prayers, cards, visits, gifts, and flowers were greatly appreciated and were such a comfort.  
Myrtle Lee White and family

Your support and concern for us recently in our time of sorrow was greatly appreciated. Whatever you did to console our hearts, we thank you.  
The family of Eugene White