



“Another safety drill?”

-- If it is your first time flying, you tend to pay attention.

-- But, if it is your umpteenth time, it tends to be that you make no eye contact with the attendant.

-- When it comes to biblical warnings about danger, it is easy for us to roll our eyes.

TR: And yet, we miss little statements in the paper about the new museum in Washington . . .



. . . This past Thursday's GR Press had an article about the Bible Museum.

-- "New attraction tells a clear, powerful story – if you accept the premise"

-- Is the Bible truth?

-- Is it historically true? Did it really happen?

-- Is it true in the worldview that it teaches?

-- "It tells the story well, in many places with factual accuracy, and always with an eye to clarity and entertainment. It is an exciting idea, and an enormously powerful tool for making sense of the world. Unless, of course, you don't believe it."

TR: Isn't the implication that it doesn't matter if something is true, just whether I believe it to be true?

“What you hear is the howling of the wolves.”

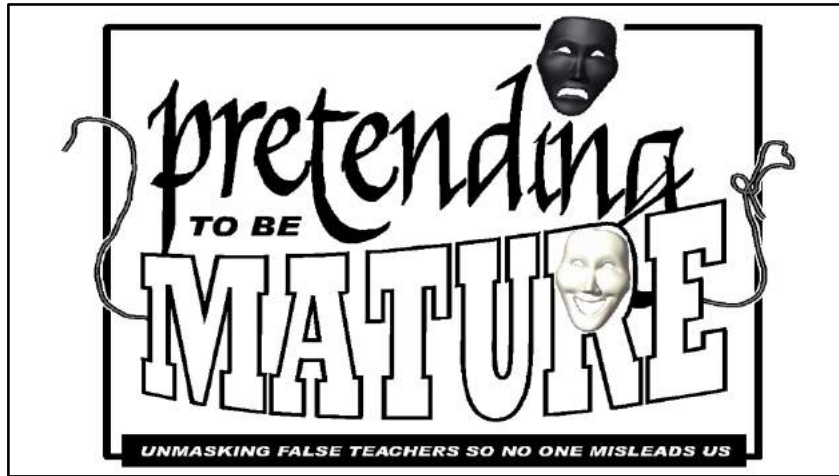


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It is the howling of the wolves that invite us to leave the Bible behind.

-- We may be tempted to roll our eyes at the warning about false teachers, but let me assure you that we shouldn't.

TR: Back in 2010 I did a series on the majority of the NT passages that talk about false teachers . . .



... and the response, as I judged it from interacting with folks, was nonchalant.

-- Sure, it was biblical and true ... but, ho hum, I'm not in danger.

TR: Read with me an extended part of 2 Peter 2 and let the Holy Spirit shake us out of our complacency about a clear and present danger.

2 Peter 2:1 p. 1121

But false prophets also arose among the people, **just as there will be false teachers among you**, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction.

ESV

READ SLIDE

TR: Verse 2

2 Peter 2:2-3 p. 1121

And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed.
³And in their greed they will exploit you with false words. Their condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.

ESV

READ SLIDE

TR: Move down to the middle of verse 10

2 Peter 2:10b-11 p. 1121

Bold and willful, they do not tremble as they blaspheme the glorious ones, ¹¹whereas angels, though greater in might and power, do not pronounce a blasphemous judgment against them before the Lord.

ESV

READ SLIDE

TR: Verse 12

But these, like irrational animals, creatures of instinct, born to be caught and destroyed, blaspheming about matters of which they are ignorant, will also be destroyed in their destruction, ¹³suffering wrong as the wage for their wrongdoing.

ESV

READ SLIDE

TR: Rest of verse 13

2 Peter 2:13b-14c p. 1121

They count it pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, while they feast with you. ¹⁴They have eyes full of adultery, insatiable for sin. They entice unsteady souls. They have hearts trained in greed.

ESV

READ SLIDE

TR: Rest of verse 14

Accursed children! ¹⁵Forsaking the right way, they have gone astray. They have followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved gain from wrongdoing, ¹⁶but was rebuked for his own transgression;

ESV

READ SLIDE

TR: Rest of verse 16

a speechless donkey spoke with human voice and restrained the prophet's madness. ¹⁷These are waterless springs and mists driven by a storm. For them the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved.

ESV

READ SLIDE

TR: Verse 18

For, speaking loud boasts of folly,
they entice by sensual passions of
the flesh those who are barely
escaping from those who live in
error.

ESV

READ SLIDE

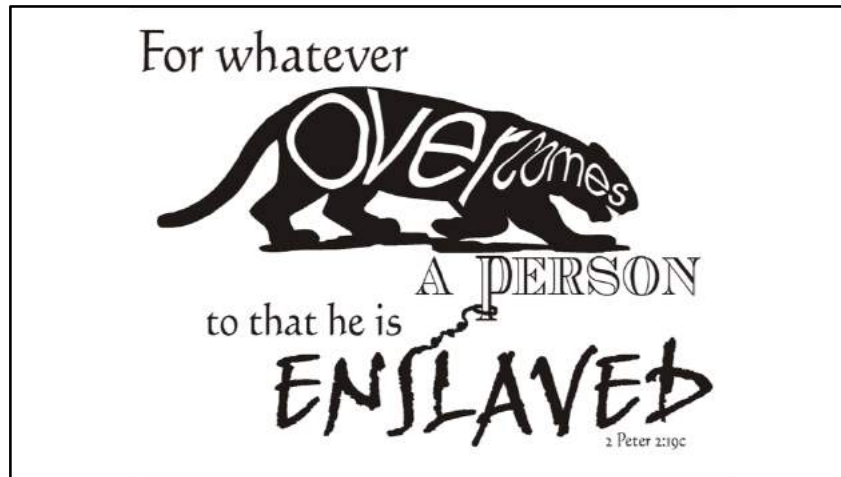
TR: Verse 19

They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption. For whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved.

ESV

READ SLIDE

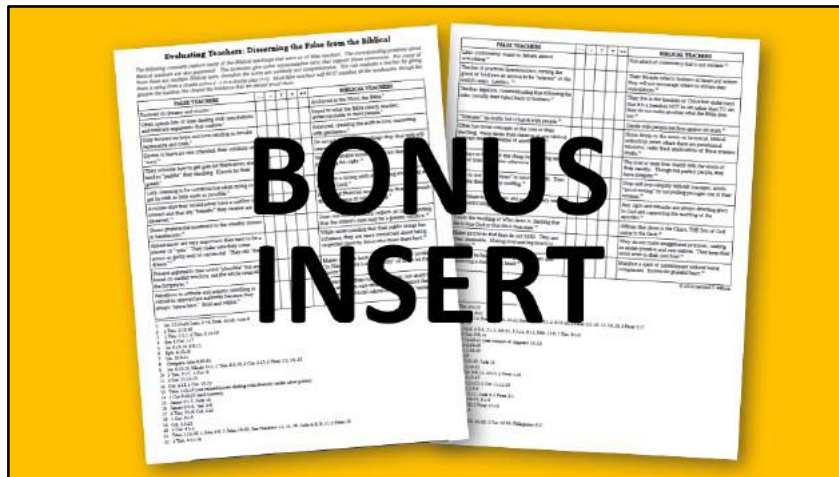
TR: These false teachers did a lot of boastful howling but they forgot . . .



READ SLIDE

-- eyes full of adultery . . . looking at virtually every woman as a potential sexual conquest.

TR: Inside your worship flier you will find . . .



**. . . a bonus insert that I prepared back in 2010. It will help you assess the teachers that you allow yourself to sit under.
 -- This will be especially important if you move and have to find a new church.**

TR: There are many traits we've just read in 2 Peter 2, and the insert adds to those from other warning passages, but at the heart of the howling . . .

“What you hear is the howling of the wolves.”

Their howling boasts of freedom, power, money



. . . are boasts of freedom, power, money.

-- There is usually some boast of a freedom to do what we want, without facing the consequences of those choices.

-- There often are prideful assertions that they can take authority over the forces that are beyond our normal eyesight .

. . that they can name it and claim it when it comes to commanding demons or disease.

-- And there commonly is found an obsession with wealth, especially their own.

TR: But, these loud boasts of folly are . . .

**“What you hear is the
howling of the
wolves.”**

*Their howling boasts of
freedom, power, money*

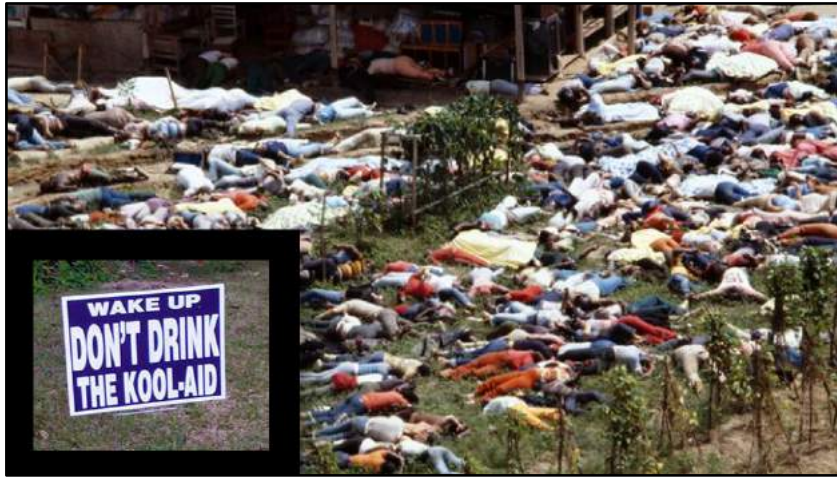
*But, their boasts are
empty*



. . . empty.

-- They are waterless springs and mists driven by a storm . . .
they seem to promise life-giving rain in an arid country but
yield nothing.

TR: Their howling, loud boasts, can be very tempting to
unsuspecting sheep. They package their poison in . . .



. . . kool-aid.

-- Like the Jonestown massacre in 1978, with 909 dead, including over 200 children.

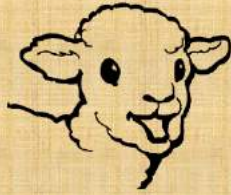
-- Jim Jones preached against racism . . . but there were increasing accusations of financial fraud, physical abuse.

-- The paranoid Jones moved his Temple to Guyana, to build his socialist utopia.

-- We may roll our eyes and say that would never happen to us . . . and yet some 75% of those raised in homes that profess Christ walk away from the faith, enticed by a different kool-aid.

TR: We need to hear coach Peter's admonishment . . .

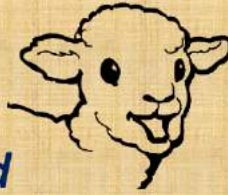
**“Don’t be a gullible
sheep and listen to
their enticements.”**



READ SLIDE

TR: One of the most controversial things our passage teaches us is that . . .

“Don’t be a gullible sheep and listen to their enticements.”



Many of the wolves used to claim to be sheep

READ SLIDE

- If I only had this passage of Scripture, I would assume that you can walk away from your salvation.
- Other Scriptures make clear that salvation is a work of God and what He begins . . . He completes.
- While the tension remains, the warning is loud and clear . . . if you can hear it above the howling and in spite of the temptation to be complacent.

TR: We are used to the phrase . . .



. . . a wolf in sheep's clothing . . .

-- but, it is hard to accept that many of the wolves professed to be sheep.

-- Actually, I've found that those who are most rabid against Christianity are those who used to go to church.

TR: What can we learn from these who appeared to be sheep becoming wolves?

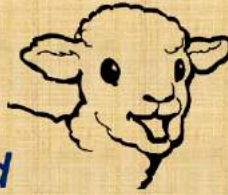
Accursed children! ¹⁵**Forsaking the right way,** they have gone astray. They have followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved gain from wrongdoing, ¹⁶but was rebuked for his own transgression;

ESV

We learn that they have forsaken the right way and gone astray.

TR: What does this mean?

“Don’t be a gullible sheep and listen to their enticements.”



Many of the wolves used to claim to be sheep

- they forsook the right way

They knew the right way, but they made an intentional decision to step away from the straight and narrow way, as Jesus described it.

-- Not doing the next right thing is incredibly dangerous.

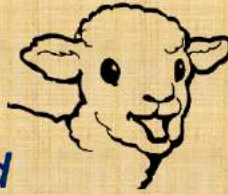
TR: These wolves also choose to get involved in doing the wrong things again . . .

For if, after they have escaped **the defilements of the world** through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, **they are again entangled in them** and overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first.

ESV

- They were again entangled in the defilements of the world.
- The theological view that these folks lost their salvation is tied to verses like this.
 - They HAD escaped the defilements THROUGH the knowledge of Jesus . . .
 - BUT then they are entangled again and overcome.
- TR: These wolves . . .

“Don’t be a gullible sheep and listen to their enticements.”



Many of the wolves used to claim to be sheep

- *they forsook the right way*
- *they got entangled again*

. . . got entangled again.

-- One of the grave dangers to our spiritual health is an incomplete or less than radical repentance from the worldly defilements that we struggled with before coming to Christ.

-- Our coming to Jesus is more of a “I’m sorry for whatever wrongs I’ve done” type of an apology vs. one that is specific.

TR: Verses 21-22 build on this idea . . .

For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to **turn back from the holy commandment** delivered to them.

ESV

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TR: Verse 22

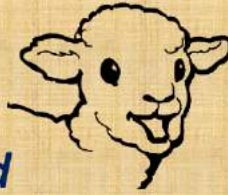
What the true proverb says has happened to them: "The dog returns to its own vomit, and the sow, after washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire."

ESV

READ SLIDE

TR: These wolves, who used to claim to be sheep . . .

“Don’t be a gullible sheep and listen to their enticements.”



Many of the wolves used to claim to be sheep

- *they forsook the right way*
- *they got entangled again*
- *they turned back*

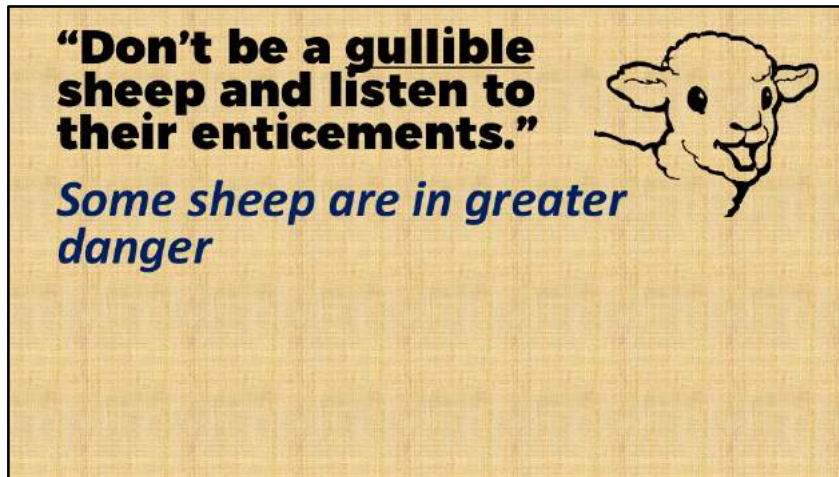
READ SLIDE

-- They turned back from the holy commandment. “The commandment of holiness.”

-- That is, the obedience of faith, trusting Christ must lead to a changed life.

-- Understanding what happened to these apparent sheep who turned into wolves is a start to protecting ourselves.

TR: we must then ask ourselves . . .



**... are we sheep who are in danger of doing the same thing?
Some sheep are clearly in greater danger. They are living in the danger zone.**

-- Two critical verses have helped me examine myself ... to NOT roll my eyes at Coach Peter’s warning.

TR: First is in verse 14 ...

2 Peter 2:13b-14c p. 1121

They count it pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, while they feast with you. ¹⁴They have eyes full of adultery, insatiable for sin. **They entice unsteady souls.** They have hearts trained in greed.

ESV

30

**Who do these wolves entice with their boastful howling?
-- Those with UNSTEADY SOULS.**

TR: What does that mean?

“Don’t be a gullible sheep and listen to their enticements.”



Some sheep are in greater danger

- they have unsteady souls

An unsteady soul is one that is tossed here and there by every wind of doctrine.

-- These wolves lure with bait piles.

-- Hebrews calls on us to steady our souls and not give in to diverse and strange teachings.

-- When we don’t know what the Bible teaches, when we don’t have our feet firmly planted on the truth, then the crazy sounds of the coyotes in the distance may sound like enticing laughter.

-- Do we know what we believe? And why? Do we have steady souls?

TR: Then verse 18 reminds us that knowing our Bibles is not enough . . .

For, speaking loud boasts of folly, they entice by sensual passions of the flesh those who are **barely escaping** from those who live in error.

ESV

- . . . we need to apply the Word to our lives.**
- Who is enticed? Those who are barely escaping.**
- This suggests young or immature believers.**

TR: We are endanger if . . .

“Don’t be a gullible sheep and listen to their enticements.”



Some sheep are in greater danger

- *they have unsteady souls*
- *they have barely escaped*

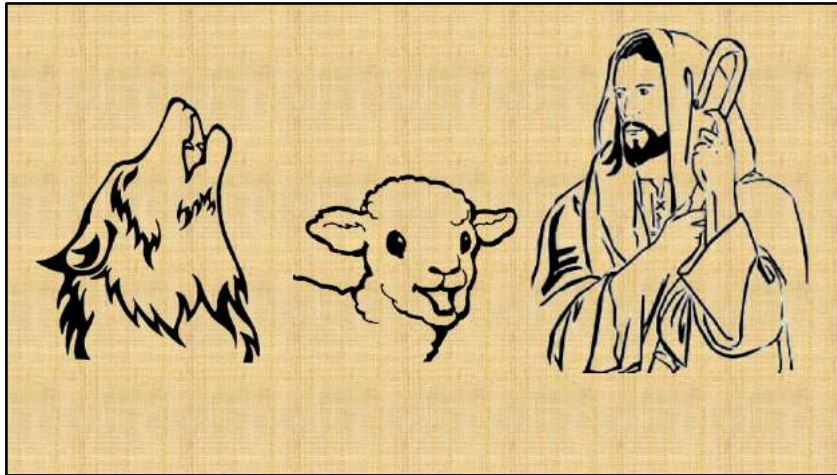
. . . we have barely escaped.

-- The sheep turned wolves were entangled again . . . these sheep in danger are walking too close to the edge themselves.

-- They are walking too close to the vines of entanglement in the defiling sensual passions.

-- Where in our lives have we not made a radical enough break from sin? Are we barely escaping?

TR: I went out of order of the text because I wanted to end with a positive encouragement.



**We move from hearing the boastful howling of the wolves, the false teachers, . . .
-- to the warnings about become a gullible sheep that listens to the enticements by not having a steady soul.**

TR: The way to make sure that we are not among those who drink the kool-aid is to come to the Shepherd of our souls.

**“Pay attention to the
Shepherd’s truth.”**



And . . . READ SLIDE

TR: Move back to chapter 1 with me . . .

For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were **eyewitnesses** of his majesty.

ESV

READ SLIDE

TR: Verse 17

2 Peter 1:17-18 p. 1120

For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased,"¹⁸ **we ourselves heard** this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain.

ESV

READ SLIDE

TR: Peter is telling us to pay attention to the Shepherd who has given us . . .

“Pay attention to the Shepherd’s truth.”

He has given us eyewitness truth



. . . eyewitness truth.

-- Peter is referring to the Transfiguration.

-- He was an eyewitness of this event and he himself heard the voice from heaven.

-- It seems that the false teachers of Peter’s day were those who said that there may be a God, but that he doesn’t really get involved in the lives of people.

-- That God intervenes in this world is clear by the truth of the eye-witnessed transfiguration.

TR: Then verse 19 continues . . .

And we have **the prophetic word more fully confirmed**, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts,

ESV

READ SLIDE

TR: Verse 20

knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation.
²¹For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

ESV

READ SLIDE

-- we have the prophetic word confirmed
-- and these prophecies were not produced by men but ultimately by God the Spirit.

TR: Does God intervene in our world? Yes. How do we know?

“Pay attention to the Shepherd’s truth.”

He has given us eyewitness truth

He has given us prophetic truth



READ SLIDE

- The many prophecies, types, and fore-shadowings found in the OT, confirm to us the truth of the Gospel.
- Of the 60 major prophecies of Christ, the odds of randomly fulfilling just 8 of them would be to cover Texas two feet deep in silver dollars and then pick out the only marked one.

TR: Finally, in chapter 2, verse 4 and following we find the last call to pay attention to the Shepherd’s truth.

2 Peter 2:4-5 p. 1121

For if God did not spare **angels** when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment; ⁵if he did not spare the **ancient world**, but **preserved Noah**, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly;

ESV

In the original language, verses 4-10 is one long sentence. English translations break it up and repeat the “IF” (for clarity)

-- READ SLIDE

TR: Verse 6

if by turning the cities of **Sodom and Gomorrah** to ashes he condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; ⁷and if he **rescued righteous Lot**, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked

ESV

READ SLIDE

TR: Verse 8

(for as that righteous man lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard); ⁹then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment,

ESV

READ SLIDE

TR: Coach Peter calls on us to wake up and pay attention, not to the wolves' howling, but to the Shepherd's truth.

**“Pay attention to the
Shepherd’s truth.”**



*He has given us
eyewitness truth*

He has given us prophetic truth

He has given us historical truth

The eyewitness, prophetic and historical truth.

-- Peter reviews how in the past God intervened dealing with the angels, with the flood, and with Sodom and Gomorrah

TR: He does this to make clear the IF and THEN connection

“Pay attention to the Shepherd’s truth.”



IF God intervened when . . .

THEN: He knows how to rescue

*He knows how to keep
under punishment*

READ SLIDE

-- This is in direct contradiction to the false teachers who imagine that while there may be a God, he doesn’t care about us or about what we do.

-- He can’t rescue and He won’t punish.

TR: Some of us may be tempted to not pay attention to Coach Peter’s safety drill. We might imagine that constant drilling and following safety protocols doesn’t really matter that much. Until . . .



- . . . we have repeated, deadly disasters.**
- The navy obviously thought something needed to be done with the Pacific fleet . . . there was quite a shakeup of those who were accountable to make sure safety protocols were followed.**
 - We may imagine that we are as tough as a destroyer, and perhaps we've heard it all before . . .**
 - BUT, wisdom challenges us to ask ourselves two key questions.**

TR: First . . .

AM I “BARELY ESCAPING?”



READ SLIDE

- Are there defilements of the world that I am staying too close to? Am I setting myself up to be entangled again?
- Has God shown me the path of holiness but I choose to live as close to my before Christ ways as possible?

TR: A second question for the teachable person, who has looked up and made eye contact with the coach . . .

AM I “BARELY ESCAPING?”

**DO I HAVE AN
“UNSTEADY SOUL?”**



READ SLIDE

- Do I have a rock solid confidence that the Scriptures are true, and NOT JUST true for me?
- Do I have a firm grip on the core biblical truths so that I can smell heresy when it shows up?
- Am I in the Word of God daily, asking the Spirit to help me take my knowledge of God and His ways and then help you make every effort to work them into my daily choices?

TR: Knowing that the wolves and coyotes are out there, howling and seeking to tear the sheep limb from limb . . . and realizing how gullible most of us are . . . could petrify a lot of us. So, I end with a verse from Jude, whose letter shares many of the same themes as 2 Peter . . .



I now commit you all . . . “To Him Who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before His glorious presence without fault and with great joy.”

Pay attention to the Shepherd.