

December 24 Answers

- 1) Peter wrote previously about the persecution the believers were suffering from those outside the church, and he encouraged the congregation to stand fast in the faith. Peter now wrote concerning the theological and moral **heresy** the believers were facing from those **within** the church. The threat came from false teachers who had once been **disciples** themselves! This teaches us that it's possible for a believer to **fall away** from the faith. We must be on guard against the temptations of **pride**, **greed** and **sensuality**, for they are just as real today as they were in Peter's day (2 Pet 2:10, 15, 18). The false teachers dismissed the apostles' eyewitness accounts of Jesus' ministry as **myths**, **questioned** the truth of Scripture, denied the **second** coming of Christ, and twisted **Paul's** teachings into error (cf. 2 Pet 1:16, 21; 3:4, 16). This teaches us that we can recognize false teachers by what they **say**. They deny God's Word and teach their **own** ideas instead of the Spirit's inspired truth. The false teachers also **exploited** the church, **enticed** those who were weak, **despised** authority, and encouraged others to **indulge** in the passions of the flesh. This teaches us that we can recognize false teachers by what they **do**. They refuse to be **holy** and insist that God's grace is a license to **sin**. Peter knew how dangerous these false teachers were to the church, and he urged his readers to be diligent to **grow** in **grace**. If they would be **diligent** to increase in the spiritual character qualities he mentioned, they would be **safe** from apostasy and their calling and election would be **secure** (2 Pet 1:5–11).