

*Knowing God in the Last Days*, by Mark H. Hoeksema. Jenison, Michigan: RFPA, 2017. 96 pages. (hardcover) [Reviewed by Rev. Martyn McGeown]

Ministers enjoy good commentaries. One characteristic of a *bad* commentary is a lot of extraneous, and indeed boring, introductory material—perhaps useful for scholars in ivory towers, but next to useless for a pastor who desires to construct edifying, nourishing sermons for the flock. *Bad* commentaries on 2 Peter spend pages speculating about the author of the book (many deny that Peter wrote the epistle), the historical background, and other matters. Hoeksema gets straight to the point: after a short (5 pages) introduction, he jumps into the text.

But this book is not only—or even mainly—useful for ministers. Hoeksema writes for God’s people, many of whom are not scholars and do not need to be scholars. This book will be helpful, therefore, for the busy husband and father who prepares for family devotions, or for the church member who prepares for Bible study in his local congregation. It is also accessible to young people, so that all members of the church will benefit from this study on 2 Peter.

Hoeksema captures the theme of the book in the title: it concerns the knowledge of God and it prepares the believer to live in the last days, hence *Knowing God in the Last Days*. Without true knowledge of God, it is impossible to live in the last days, which are the days of the New Testament age, the days in which we live.

The author is meticulous in explaining the Greek grammar of the epistle, but without becoming overly technical or burdening the reader with excessive footnotes. The exegesis is also very sharp with clear, precise definitions of the major concepts in the text. This is exactly the kind of exegesis that forms the basis of good sermons, and the kind of exegesis that God’s people should learn to recognise and to practice. Every child of God, whether he is aware of it or not, is an exegete—he *can* and *does* interpret the scriptures. The mother in the home is an exegete for her children; the father exegetes at the supper table; the member exegetes in the Bible society; and the child and teenager exegete in the catechism room. To that end, Hoeksema helpfully defines and explains theological concepts such as “grace” (11), “power” (14), “godliness” (15), and “glory” (16), to name but a few of the important terms in 2 Peter. Hoeksema, therefore, gives clear examples of how to exegete the text of scripture.

2 Peter consists of three short chapters: in chapter 1, the apostle introduces his theme of the knowledge of God and exhorts the saints to build up that good foundation; in chapter 2, the apostle warns about the threat of false teachers who would rob God’s people of the true knowledge of God, and explains both the condemnation of the false teachers and the security of God’s children; and in chapter 3, the apostle connects his theme to the last days, setting forth the truth of the coming of the Lord. Each of these chapters Hoeksema carefully expounds for the edification of the reader.

I encourage the reader to pick up this book and study it carefully. Although it is brief, which means it can be read fairly quickly, it contains a lot of helpful information on Peter’s second epistle, which if carefully heeded will enable the believing reader to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.