

## THE PASSION OF PETER

### Part 1

2 Peter 1:8-21

**Intro:** I am going deal with this passage in two Sundays rather than one.

Today we will go only as far as verse 15, and deal with the remainder of the chapter next Sunday.

When the Apostle Paul wrote to the churches of Galatia, one of the things that he said to them was, “But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing” (Gal. 4:18). Adam Clarke described this word as meaning “a determined mind and an ardent heart.” This word, “to be zealously affected,” one word in the Greek, described the Apostle Peter as he wrote this second epistle. He was really on fire with the importance of his message, and he felt a great urgency to get the message across to the believers for which he had such a great concern. And the urgency he felt was prompted by two realities:

- 1) He knew that he was not going to live much longer, and so he felt the pressure of time.
- 2) He knew the danger the people would face, or were facing, because of false teachers (his subject in chapter 2).

He obviously had a great love for the people to whom he was writing. He had a deep interest in their spiritual welfare, and he wanted to do all that he could to protect them from false teaching as well as from the sinfulness of their own hearts.

And so as we have seen week after week in considering this chapter, and I trust often as we have read this epistle, we can say that Peter was consumed with a passion for the truth, and for the people of God. He was writing the truth to them about their own continuing needs, and he said that as long as he lived he was not going to stop talking about what he called “these things,” and, in writing this epistle to them, he was making sure that they would not forget what he had to tell them.

Peter was “zealously affected” by the truth he was presenting. And it is “good” that he was. His heart was filled with a deep love for the Lord and for the truth, and he was overflowing with zeal to tell them what they needed in their lives -- each and every one of them!. He did not want them to be carried away with the subtlety of false teachers. He wanted them to be able to stand and to continue to grow. And this is what made him focus on those seven words, seven characteristics, which are so extremely important for every child of God to know, *and to seek!*

Now I want to raise a question which I know that I cannot answer with great certainty, but I am going to answer it knowing how it is that the Lord teaches us.

My question is: How did Peter learn what he has written here in the first chapter of his second epistle? Did the Lord reveal it to him as he was writing, or was he writing what the Lord had been teaching him before he took his pen in hand, and wrote?

One thing that the Apostle Peter wrote to the Ephesian believers, I think is helpful in answering my question. Paul said in Ephesian 3:4 in connection with what he was writing,

Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ.

This seems that he was writing what the Lord had taught him before he wrote. We know that the writers of Scripture wrote under the direction of the Holy Spirit, but we also know that they were men who learned like we do. They didn't know everything, but what God had taught them, they wrote, and the Holy Spirit not only guided them, but protected them from making any errors.

We have seen several place in Peter's epistles how various things that he said reflected his past experiences. So it seems to me (and remember that I am speculating at this point because what I am about to say is not revealed in Scripture) – so it seems to me that when Peter failed the Lord, he must have gone to the Lord in his deep sorrow for what he had said and done, asking the Lord, “Lord, why did I commit such grievous sins against One Whom I love like I love You?” Peter may have had some ideas as to *why* he did it, but wouldn't you like to know the full answer if you had denied the Lord like Peter did? And haven't there been times in your life when you have failed the Lord in some way, and you have gone to Him seeking to know *why*?

Rarely does the Lord answer us in full immediately, but He shows us through His Word, and He deals with us in various ways so that we learn *why* we have failed, and we learn what we need to do to prevent failure in the future. I think that it must have been over a period of time that the Lord showed Peter his need for these spiritual traits that he has mentioned in verses 5 through 7. And one point in this chapter that makes me think that Peter was telling us what the Lord had taught him, is because Peter said in verse 10 with reference to the things that the Lord had taught him, “For if ye do these things, ye shall never fall”! Surely he was telling us

where he had failed before, how he had been changed, and why he never repeated the sins which had so deeply grieved the Lord, and which had deeply grieved him, too.

I would not for one moment want to through any doubt upon the Holy Spirit's work in what Peter wrote, but I do feel that Peter was telling us what the Lord had taught him, and the Holy Spirit directed him so that what he has written is the truth of God. After all, if you have known the Lord for any time at all, can't you say what the Lord has been teaching you? When we tell our story, we may not have everything straight, and there undoubtedly things that we haven't learned yet, but Peter had the advantage of the Spirit's help in ways that you and I have not been given.

If you look back on Peter's denial of the Lord, we can certainly see that he was not acting like a child of God when he denied that he knew the Lord, and he did not know all that he needed to know either about the Lord, or about himself – so he needed knowledge. And it was very apparent that he lacked self-control, or temperance. Neither was he persevering. His purpose was to spare himself, not to please the Lord. And there may have been (we can't say for sure), but there may have been ways in which he was out of fellowship with some of the other disciples, or some other believers. And he certainly was not motivated in what he did by love for the Lord, but by fear.

So now looking at this passage, one major reason that he was so passionate about "these things" was because of:

### **I. THE GREAT PROMISES OF GOD WHICH WERE ATTACHED TO THEM (2 Peter 1:8-11).**

And here we know that he continued to speak by the Spirit of the Lord. There are three very wonderful promises.

The first one is in verse 8.

#### **A. "These things" lead us into an intimate acquaintance with our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 1:8).**

(Read the verse.) The word for knowledge here is *a full knowledge, a growing knowledge, a more complete knowledge.*

One thing "these things" will do for us is they will bring us into a much

closer fellowship with our Lord Jesus Christ. These are characteristics which we find perfectly in our Lord, and we get them from Him!

What could possibly be more to be desired among people who know the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior.

But there is another great promise in verse 10.

**B. “These things” confirm our salvation, and strengthen us against ever falling, or ever falling again (2 Pet. 1:10).**

Adding “these things” to our faith is that which gives us assurance, thus confirming our salvation, with the promise that if we continue on adding “these things,” we “shall never fall.”

Peter knew what it was to fall. He knew how it grieved his Lord, and he knew the bitterness and the regret that it brought to his own heart. He knew that as long as he lived, he would be able to sin, but he also knew that in these seven characteristics which he was to continue adding to his faith, they were a safeguard against falling into sin. Some grammarians prefer the translation, *supply*. Peter used the aorist tense to indicate that the action has been taken. Clearly this is action that can be started, and then, for any reason, be stopped. But the promise would apply to action that is taken, and continued. At any point in time the believer should be found seeking these characteristics.

How very important this must have been to Peter. He didn’t want to “fall” again. And neither should we. Sin is powerful, and we in ourselves are weak. Therefore, we need this close association with our Lord from Whom we draw these qualities and the power which they will supply to us.

But there is still another promise, and for this we look at verse 11.

**C. “These things” guarantee an abundant entrance into our Lord’s eternal kingdom (2 Pet. 1:11).**

The verb “shall be ministered” is the same verb in the Greek which is translated “add” in verse 5. The thought is that if we spend our time here on earth supplying “these things” to our faith, God will supply us with an abundant entrance “into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Living as Peter encourages us here to live, is what it means

to “grow in grace.” It is setting our affections on things above, not on things on the earth, as Paul told the Colossian believers to do. And it is looking at the things which cannot be seen, except as they may be displayed in our lives, the result of looking at the things which are eternal. When we combine all three of these promises, it is little wonder that Peter passionately desired for all believers to live as he was saying that they should live, seeking what he said, by the Holy Spirit, that they should seek.

Now let us look at:

## **II. PETER’S PASSION IN HIS MINISTRY (2 Peter 1:12-15).**

From what Peter had to say here about the remaining days of his ministry, we can see that as long as he lived, he was going to be talking to the people of God about “these things.” And here again we have three points.

### **A. For knowledgeable and established believers (2 Pet. 1:12).**

Obviously there were those to whom Peter was writing who were already living as he was teaching that they should live. But Peter knew that those who know the truth, love to hear it again and again, and are never offended whenever they are reminded to do what they are already doing. The person who is offended is one who is not really obeying the Lord. As I read these words I am reminded of that Gospel song which says,

I love to tell the story, for those who know it best  
Seem hungering and thirsting to hear it like the rest.

When I was a student at Dallas Seminary, I was asked to preach at the Scofield Memorial Church. It was located in downtown Dallas at the time, and was the church where Dr. C. I. Scofield had been the pastor for many years, and where Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer had assisted him, and where he had often ministered the Word. Frankly I felt very uncomfortable at the prospect of preaching there, and very unworthy of the privilege that was offered to me. When I arrived, I expressed my apprehension to one of the leaders in the church, and my heart was set at ease when he told me, “Just preach the Word. We love to hear the Word, and the people here will not be disappointed if you simply minister the Word of God to them.” And I found that to be true. I am sure that many of them were my elder brothers and sisters in the Lord, but they were a people who had been taught and taught, and who loved to have anyone open the Word to them.

Peter understood that kind of talk. He knew that the most mature believers still love to hear basic truths from the Word of God. They will never be offended if you tell them what they need, and then exhort them to continue to do what they are already doing. Peter was not talking about repeating the same sermon over and over again, but he was talking about emphasizing basic truths to the most mature believers. When he spoke of their being “established in the present truth,” he was talking about being established in “these things.”

There is another point that Peter made to show his passion for “these things.”

**B. He promised that as long as he lived he would stir them up concerning “these things” (2 Pet. 1:13-14).**

Peter expressed an interesting thought here. Being what we are, even though we have been well-taught, there are times when we need to be aroused! We need to be awakened. Stirring up is one objective in the ministry of the Word. Our problem often is not ignorance, but slothfulness. It is not that we don’t know what we should be doing, but simply that we are not doing it.

Paul told the believers at Corinth,

Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame (1 Cor. 15:34).

We not only have a responsibility to God concerning these matters about which Peter had written, and a responsibility to each other, but also a responsibility to the people of the world. Nobody is going to ask a sleepy Christian for a reason of the hope that is in him. Again, regardless who the exhortation might come from, we can always be thankful for people who by their lives as well as by their words, will stir us up.

But there is a third and last point that the Apostle Peter made concerning his own ministry, which showed his passion for these truths.

**C. He intended to make sure that even after he was gone they would still be reminded of “these things” (2 Pet. 1:15).**

Most of us here today have lived long enough to realize how much conditions in the church today have deteriorated spiritually. Those of you who knew Dr. Mitchell will remember how he lamented often that “the church has become worldly, and the world has become ‘churchy.’” And it has all

become much worse since he left us and went to heaven. Too often we have the attitude that Hezekiah displayed when he was told by Isaiah the prophet that the day would come when the Babylonians would come back to get all of the treasures that he had shown them. He was even told that his own sons would be taken away, and that they would “be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon. But he was told that it would not be in his day. Do you remember what he said? I am always shocked when I read his statement. He said,

Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken... For there shall be peace and truth in my days (Isa. 39:8).

How concerned are you and I about where the church will be after we are gone (if the Lord does not come before we go to be with Him). Peter was greatly concerned. And, by the grace of God he did something about it. He wrote a letter, and that letter is a part of God’s infallible and eternal Word. So that today, almost two thousand years after he lived, through this epistle he is telling us, the Lord’s people, at the end of this twentieth century, to add to our faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge, and so on through these seven words we have been considering together. *The need of us, the Lord’s people today, is exactly the same that it was twenty centuries ago when Peter wrote these words.*

It’s tragic when the church follows the world because the world is not only getting worse and worse, but the world is passing away. If we are following the world, we have set our hopes on a sinking ship. If we are seeking to be like the world, we are seeking that from which the Lord died to save us. The church today is not in need of the world’s methods, nor the world’s ways of attracting a crowd. The church today stands in desperate need of “these things” which the Apostle Peter has made famous. Listen to words which the Apostle Paul addressed to the believers at Thessalonica along this same line:

5 Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

6 Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.

7 For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.

8 But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.

9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,

10 Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

11 Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do (1 Thess. 5:5-11).

**Concl:** As I close, let me take you back to verse 9, a verse I deliberately passed over when expounding this passage. Let me read it to you. (Read 2 Peter 1:9.)

About whom was the Apostle Peter speaking? Was he speaking about a believer, or one who professed faith in Christ, but was still unsaved. The question is answered when we ask what person can be described as one who has been purged from his old sins? That could only be a believer. Peter was saying that sometimes, and perhaps too often, you will find a believer who *lacks* “these things. He “cannot see afar off.” That is, he has forgotten why he was saved. He has lost sight of the ultimate goal of salvation (if he ever knew it). And at the same time he has “forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.” That has to do with the past. Dr. Lloyd-Jones said of the person described here, “He is a man who not only cannot see forwards, he cannot see backwards either” (*Expository Sermons on 2 Peter*, p. 45). Some Christians are like that. They need someone to bring to their remembrance why they have been saved, why it was that the Lord Jesus Christ came into the world. And they need to be stirred up to make their calling and election sure, that is, to make sure that they are saved. And they need to make sure that “these things” are “in them,” and that their goal in life is to become holy. They need to be awakened, as in verse 13. They may be saved, but if you look at their lives, you might question the profession that they make.

There are Christians like that. I hope that all of us who know the Savior are not that way, but if anyone here shows by his life that he doesn't know why he was saved, and what the goal of salvation is, then Peter has the answer for you in this passage. May God deliver us from any blindness that is hindering our spiritual sight by giving us the same earnest desire that Peter had for “these things “ by which we can show that we are partakers of the divine nature, and have escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.



## THE FINAL DAYS OF PETER'S MINISTRY

2 Peter 1:13-21

**Intro:** Some of you may be wondering if we are ever going to get out of this first chapter of 2 Peter. I have given even more time to this part of Scripture because of the tremendous importance of what Peter was saying as he wrote. His focus is clearly upon those seven words in verses 5 through 7, words which he was determined that the people to whom he was writing would never forget. They are the words *virtue, and knowledge, and self-control [temperance], and perseverance [patience], and godliness, and brotherly love, and, finally, love [charity]*. And along that line I hope that I will never forget them, and I hope none of you will ever forget them.

Last week we saw three reasons why they were important to Peter:

- 1) Because giving our undivided and continual attention to them, will lead us into a greater knowledge and fellowship with our Lord Jesus Christ. All of these characteristics are found in our Lord Jesus Christ, and it is to Him that we go to get them for ourselves. This is in verse 8.
- 2) Then we learned from verse 10 that attention to these qualities of life will confirm our election, and keep us from falling. We can't fall out of salvation, but we can fall out of fellowship with the Lord. We don't want that to happen.
- 3) And then verse 11 makes it clear that seeking these seven qualities to add to our faith, will guarantee an abundant entrance into heaven.

And so, because of these great promises, Peter went on to say in verse 12 that he would not be "negligent" to keep them reminded of "these things." In saying this he was expressing the conviction that as a faithful servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, it was his duty to continue to teach these truths to the people of God.

And, according to verse 12, this meant reminding those who already knew them and were firmly established in them. The most mature believers always need to be reminded over and over of the most basic truths. And they will not object to it, but will accept such teaching that they might go farther in the life of faith.

In verse 13 and 14 Peter indicated that as long as he lived he would continue to teach these truths because, as he said in verse 13, there are times when the most mature needed to be *stirred up!* This means that even in the lives of well-taught believers, there is often the need to arouse them, to

awaken them. Too often the problem with us is not that we don't know truth like this, but we just are not doing what we ought to be doing.

In one passage in 1 Corinthians Paul told the believers at Corinth:

Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame (1 Cor. 15:34).

We have a responsibility to God to obey His Word, but we also have a responsibility to our fellow-believers, that we might be a blessing to them, but our responsibility extends to the whole world. Often when we are stirred up, our lives will stir others up, unbelievers as well as believers. And this powerful influence often takes place even though we don't say a word. It is hard to remain cold and indifferent when we are with believers who really love the Lord, and are walking with Him.

But then Peter said one more thing about his ministry during his last days on earth. *He was writing all of this down so that after he was gone, they could still read what he had to say about the importance of these seven words.*

Many of us have lived long enough to see how far and how rapidly the professing church has deteriorated spiritually during our lives. The trend always seems to be downward. Many churches where the Gospel used to be preached, no longer preach it because they do not believe it. Universities which were established to train young people in the Scriptures, now deny the faith which they were founded to proclaim. And today in many churches we have such an invasion of the world's methods and the world's emphasis on entertainment, that the teaching and preaching of the Word of God has been given a place far below that which characterized the early church. And yet even in those days there were forces active within the church to change it from what God intended that it should be.

At our first meeting of the Tuesday Bible Class I reminded those who were there what Paul told the Ephesian elders the last time he was with them. He said this, among other things,

25 And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.

26 Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.

27 For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the

church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified (Acts 20:25-32).

In our Bible reading this week we had that section of Isaiah which told us that when the Babylonians came to see King Hezekiah, he showed them all of his treasures. And Isaiah told him that the day would come when the Babylonians would come back to get it, and that they would take his sons away and make them eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon. Do you remember how Hezekiah answered Isaiah? It is startling that a man of God like Hezekiah had been could make such a stupid statement. Let me read his words to you.

Then said Hezekiah to Isaiah, Good is the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken. He said moreover, For there shall be peace and truth in my days (Isa. 39:8).

Peter cared deeply about what would happen to believers after he was in heaven, but apparently Hezekiah was happy if things were OK while he was on earth, but he didn't care what happened to his sons after him.

How concerned are you, and how concerned am I, about what happens to the church of the Lord Jesus Christ after we are gone? Peter was deeply concerned, and from his standpoint, that is why he wrote this second epistle. Let us all recognize that the best thing we can do for our generation, and for future generations, is to make sure that as long as we live, we are supplying our faith with virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and so on down until we have included all seven of the words which Peter called, "these things."

Now we have come down to verse 16 in our chapter. And from this point on to the end of the chapter the Apostle Peter was showing why he was so concerned about "these things." And it all had to do with his love for the Lord Jesus Christ, and the deep, deep desire he had in his heart, not only to know the Lord better and better, but to become like the Lord in every part of his being.

In the closing words of this chapter Peter *zoomed in* on two great truths:

- 1) The majesty of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 2) The absolute reliability of the Scriptures.

In the time that remains today before we observe the Lord's Supper, let us examine what the Apostle Peter had to say on these two, glorious subjects.

## **I. THE MAJESTY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST (2 Pet. 1:16-18).**

(Read vv. 16-18.)

The background for these verses is the event described for us in Matthew 17:1-9, in Mark 9:2-10, and in Luke 9:28-36. It would have been a most important event in the lives of Peter, James, and John if it had only been reported in one of the Gospels, but the fact that it is in three of the Gospels, makes it *very important!*

I am going to take the time to read Matthew's account just in case there might be someone hear who does not remember this incident in the life of the Apostle Peter. This is what Matthew had to say about it:

- 1 And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart,
- 2 And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.
- 3 And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.
- 4 Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.
- 5 While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.
- 6 And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid.
- 7 And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid.
- 8 And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.
- 9 And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead (Matt. 17:1-9).

Now what did Peter say about this experience?

He said, “For we have not followed cunningly devised fables.” I am sure that this is what some people said about Peter’s testimony, and John’s testimony. It was just a *cunningly devised fable*, and that it did not really happen. It was only a dream, or perhaps something that they had made up to deceive people. But in reality there was nothing to it. A “fable” is a *myth*. “Fables” are what Paul said that people turn to when they turn away from the truth. Cf. 2 Tim. 4:4. So the people who were accusing Peter and John of making up their own story, were actually the ones who had turned to myths.

The Apostle John’s testimony concerning this incident is given in John 1:14, and this is what he said,

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

For just a short time, we don’t know how long, the veil of flesh that concealed the glory, the majesty, of our Lord Jesus Christ, was pulled aside (so to speak), and Peter, James, and John saw the Lord in His glory.

But did anything else happen? Yes!!! The Father spoke from heaven. But before the Father spoke, Mark tells us that Peter spoke. And he spoke even though he did not know what to say because he was so fearful. That is when he proposed building three tabernacles, or booths – one for Moses, one for Elijah, and one for the Lord. But the Father in speaking from heaven, said,

This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him (Matt. 17:5).

This was not a time for the apostles to be speaking, but for them to be listening. The Father was conferring upon the Lord Jesus Christ “honor and glory” when He, the Father, confirmed what our Lord had been declaring about Himself. No further confirmation was necessary.

But as wonderful as that experience was, and it was truly amazing, Peter went on to give another great truth in confirmation of what he had been discussing. And we can call this:

## **II. THE ABSOLUTE RELIABILITY OF HOLY SCRIPTURE (2 Pet. 1:19-21).**

The order of the words here needs to be changed, as it is given in the NKJ and other more recent translations. The NKJ reads, “We also have the prophetic word made more sure.” This does not mean that the Scriptures need to be made truer than they are, but Peter was speaking about the Word of God being *confirmed*. It is always strengthening to our faith when in one way or another the Word of God is confirmed. And the appearance of Christ in glory was actually a confirmation of that which was predicted in the OT concerning the coming of the Messiah and Redeemer.

One Greek scholar (Tregelles) suggested that the word order in the nineteenth verse should be, “Whereunto ye do well that ye take heed in your hearts, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star (the morning star, a reference to Christ) arise.”

We live in a world of darkness, and we were born with hearts darkened by sin. Christ has brought the light into our hearts, but the day is coming when Christ, the Light of the world, will burst through the darkness of this world like the sun bursts through at the dawning of the day, and He will dispel the darkness forever. Peter says that if we believe what the Scriptures say, we are doing well. It is impossible to do better.

And then Peter went on to give one of the grandest statements in Scripture about how we got the Word of God. And so we come to verse 20.

“No prophecy of scripture,” that is, *no part of the Word of God*, is the product of man seeking to predict the future. That is, no part of Scripture is of human origin. And so it is not like the “cunningly devised fables” of men. Instead, men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. Thus, the Holy Spirit is the Author of Scripture, but He has used many writers.

This is confirmed by many passages of Scripture.

After Zacharias had his speech restored following the birth of his son who became John the Baptist, he said, and his words are recorded in Luke 1:70, that the Lord God of Israel “spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began.”

We also have in 1 Peter added confirmation of the way the Scriptures came to be written. Listen to these words in 1 Peter 1:10-11:

10 Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you:

11 Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

So the prophets of the OT wrote their books, and then had to study much of what they had written, like we do, to learn what the meaning was.

Of course the classic passage on the inspiration of Scripture is given to us by the Apostle Paul in 2 Tim. 3:16-17, the first part of which is that “all scripture is given by inspiration of God.” It is God-breathed. It is His Word.

King David made this claim for his writing in 2 Sam.23:2 where we read that he said, “The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue.”

When the writer of the book of Hebrews was quoting from Psalm 95, this is how he began:

7 Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice,

8 Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness:

9 When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years (Heb. 3:7-9).

And in Heb. 9:7-8 when the writer of Hebrews was saying that the high priest could only go into the Holy of Holies once every year, this is how he expressed himself:

7 But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people:

8 The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing (Heb. 9:7-8).

Let me give you one more illustration that the Word has come to us from God through the Holy Spirit. It is found in Mark 12:35-37 where our Lord was teaching in the temple, and He asked, “How say the scribes that Christ is the Son of David?” And then He went on to say,

36 For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool.

37 David therefore himself calleth him Lord; and whence is he

then his son? And the common people heard him gladly.

No book was ever written like the Bible was written. The Holy Spirit is the Author of all sixty-six books. It is infallible and eternal. And as Peter said, "You do well that ye take heed" to it "in your heart." That is, that you believe it, and trust the One the Word was given to proclaim, our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Concl:** And the opposite is equally true. The worst thing that any person can ever do, is to ignore the teaching of Scripture, and die without Christ and with no hope. We can never praise God enough, nor can we praise Him as we should, for the gift of His precious Word. It now is what Christ will be when He comes again, *a Light shining in a dark place*. Only in the Bible can we learn the truth about God, and only in the Bible can we learn the truth about ourselves. And only in the Bible can we learn how sin has created a humanly unmoveable barrier between God and us, but how God has removed that barrier through the death of His Son. Don't believe anyone who tells you that it is just another book written by men. It did not originate with men. It originated with God. And God has preserved it for us all of these years that it might be a light for us out of the darkness of sin, telling us of Christ Who is the only Savior of sinners.

We have no hesitation at all here at Trinity Bible Church in saying that the Bible is God's Word from Genesis to Revelation, the Book of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.



**FALSE PROPHETS THEN, FALSE TEACHERS NOW**

## 2 Peter 2:1-3

**Intro:** Chapter 2 is entirely different from chapter 1, and it might seem at the outset that there was really no connection between the two. It might appear to the casual reader that the Apostle Peter was combining two subjects which were entirely unrelated.

But we know that the books of the Bible were not written that way. There is a divine wisdom clearly evident in every book of the Bible, and if we can't see the connection, the fault is ours. There is a sacred logic that is to be seen throughout every book of the Bible. Peter had just written that the Scriptures are the result of what men wrote as they were moved along in their writing by the Holy Spirit. So to question any relationship between chapters 1 and 2 is a reflection upon the Holy Spirit, not the Apostle Peter.

Let us seek then to determine the relationship between the two chapters.

I hope that all of us realize by now that one of the main points of emphasis in chapter 1 has to do with the spiritual understanding and growth of the people of God. All of us need to have our faith strengthened by the "things" which Peter had indicated were of paramount importance for every child of God, so important that he was not only going to devote the rest of his life to teaching them, but he was writing it all down so the believers would remember them even after he was gone.

Secondly, we have seen that Peter declared that what he was emphasizing about the Lord Jesus Christ (because all of the things that he had mentioned were to be found in Christ) – those things were not "cunningly devised fables." Instead, he mentioned how "we," in verse 16, meaning himself, and James and John, had been eyewitnesses of the glory of Christ when He had been transfigured in their presence on what has become known as *the mount of transfiguration*.

So he was denying that they were guilty of false teaching. And remember that in the Law of Moses it was clearly established that in the mouth of two or three witnesses any word was confirmed, or any matter was made certain. Cf. Deut. 19:15, and also a couple of chapters before that in Deut. 17:6. In Scripture itself we have the testimony of both Peter and John that they actually saw the Lord in His divine glory!

But then Peter went on to say in 2 Peter 1:19-21 these words: (read).

Now – this being true, the Bible stands as the book by which all teaching regarding God and man is to be judged. Men deny that there is a God; the Bible teaches that there is a God, a personal God, an eternal God, a holy God. So what are we going to say about men who say there is no God? There is only one thing to say, and that is that those men are liars. They are false teachers.

There are millions and millions of people who firmly believe that we and the universe about us are the products of a process of evolution. The Bible says that “in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” Furthermore the Bible declares that man was created, and created in the image and likeness of God. What can we say about the evolutionist even though he occupies a place of great distinction in one of our universities and has a Ph. D. after his name? We can only say that as far as his idea about the origin of the universe and man is concerned, he is a liar.

What about the people who say that man by nature is good, and refuse to believe that there is such a thing as sin when the Bible says that “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God? Again in the words of Scripture, “let God be true, but every man a liar” (Rom. 3:4). *Every time you find anyone who teaches anything that is contrary to what the Bible teaches, that man is a liar; the Word of God is always true. The Bible is not a human production, but men have written the Bible as they were directed to write by the Holy Spirit. And so the Bible is the Word of God.*

So the connection between chapters 1 and 2 is that we as believers need to be firmly established in our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, and absolutely convinced that the Bible is the Word of God. And one of the big reasons that these two points are so important is brought out in the first three verses of chapter 2, the first point being,

### **I. THERE ALWAYS HAVE BEEN, AND ALWAYS WILL BE, FALSE TEACHERS (1 Peter 2:1a).**

The Devil was the first false teacher. After God created Adam he was told,

16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:

17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die (Gen. 2:16-17).

And what did the Devil tell Eve? He said,

4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:

5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil (Gen. 3:4-5).

Who was right? The Lord God was, and He has never been wrong. On the other hand, remember what the Lord said about the Devil. His words are recorded for us in John 8:44. The Lord was speaking to unbelieving Jewish leaders, and this is what He said:

44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it (John 8:44).

The Apostle Peter said, "But there were false prophets also among the people." The "also" means that they had the Word of God, and they professed to believe it, but even though they had the Word, they had the false prophets too.

Let me give you just a very small sample of all of the OT verses which speak of the false prophets.

The prophet Jeremiah had this to say about the people of Judah in his day:

31 The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof? (Jer. 5:31).

We also read this in Jer. 14:14:

14 Then the LORD said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart.

And then in Jer. 23:25-26 we read these words of the Lord"

25 I have heard what the prophets said, that prophesy lies in my name, saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed.

26 How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies? yea, they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart;

Micah has given us these words of the Lord:

11 The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money: yet will

they lean upon the LORD, and say, Is not the LORD among us?  
none evil can come upon us (Micah 3:11).

Idolatry was always prevalent among the Lord's people in the OT. To the Lord this was spiritual adultery. And along with listening to the false prophets and worshiping false gods, the People who claimed to be the people of God, killed the good prophets which the Lord had sent to them. Our Lord referred to this in Matthew 23:37-38 where it is reported that He said,

37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

The reason that they believed the false prophets and killed the true prophets, is because the false prophets told them what they wanted to hear, but the true prophets condemned them for their sins, and warned them of the judgment of God – which they did not want to believe!

It would be wonderful if false prophets were to be found only in the OT. But that is not true. The Apostle Peter went on to say that:

## **II. THERE WOULD CONTINUE TO BE FALSE PROPHETS AMONG THE PEOPLE IN HIS DAY (2 Pet. 2:1a).**

The Lord Jesus said this also in Matt. 7:15: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves."

Recently I reminded those of you who are in the Tuesday Class of what the Apostle Paul said to the Ephesian elders on his last visit with them. He spoke of his own ministry, and then he issued a warning to them. This is what he said:

28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three

years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears (Acts 20:28-31).

The Apostle Paul was reminding the elders that it was not only their responsibility to teach the truth, but they were also to keep warning their people against false teachers. Sometimes they would come in from the outside, and sometimes they would arise from within.

Remember also what the Apostle John had to say about false teachers:

1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

2 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:

3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world (1 John 4:1-3).

And we know that we have them with us today. People are deceived by their friendly manner. And there is such widespread ignorance of the Bible that most people are not prepared to judge the rightness or the error of what they are hearing, and this is why so many accept false teaching.

But now let us notice what Peter said about false teachers in the past, and even in his own day, because what he said applies to false teaching today.

### **III. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF FALSE TEACHERS AND THEIR TEACHING.**

#### **A. “Who privily bring in damnable heresies” (2 Pet. 2:1m).**

Notice the word “privily.” We don’t use this word today, but it is apparent that it means. It suggests that there are probably a lot of things that they will say that you can agree with – the bad times in which we live, the corruption of our leaders, the threats we face from foreign nations, etc. But without you knowing it, they will secretly, or deceitfully, bring in “damnable heresies.” What are “damnable heresies”? They are false teachings, which if you believe them, will lead you straight to hell. These teachers may have some complimentary things to say about our Lord, but they stop short of saying that He is the Son of God, and they do not look upon His death as an atoning sacrifice for sins. And if you do not believe those two truths, you cannot be saved!

Now this verse is used by those who believe that Christ died to save everyone, and so let me point out what I believe Peter was saying here.

He was not saying that our Lord died to save those false teachers who deny the plain teaching of Scripture concerning Christ, and concerning salvation. He was saying,

“But there were false teachers also among the people,” and then saying parenthetically, “even as there shall be false teachers among you,” and then going on still talking about what had happened in the past, “who privily bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them,” that is, those people, “and bring upon themselves swift destruction.”

Peter’s concern here is for the people of God. They need to realize that all false teaching is wrong, and it is “damnable.” It cannot result in the loss of salvation for anyone who is saved, but it can often lead believers astray, and it keeps unbelievers from the basic truths of the Word of God which are absolutely essential for salvation. Any departure from the truth of the Word of God is dangerous. It is deadly as far as salvation is concerned. So we as believers need to be grounded in the truth, and walking with the Lord, with an unshakeable confidence that the Bible is the Word of God, and that any deviation from the Biblical teaching is heresy.

But notice a second point that Peter made.

**B. “And many shall follow their pernicious ways” (2 Pet. 2:2a).**

People are often deceived by the large numbers that follow false teaching. And we are so prone to be impressed by numbers, that we take that as an indication that what is going on is either right, or it can’t all be wrong, and so we are inclined to accept it.

But if it is not teaching that is true to the Word of God, it is “pernicious.” What does that mean? It means *sinful ways, very sinful ways*. Idolatry in the OT looked very harmless from the outside, but once a person got involved it almost always led to gross sin. Remember that religion is not always godly. It can’t be godly if it is wrong. And so people get pulled in and do not realize the corruption they can get involved in until it is too late. So don’t be deceived by the large following that many false teachers have. If it is wrong (and it can’t be right if it is in conflict with the Word), then the results can never be good.

And remember that if people come with heretical teaching, it means that whether they say so or not, they will be speaking evil of the way of truth. The Bible is the basis upon which all religious teaching is to be judged. We need to remember what Isaiah the prophet, a true prophet said along this line:

20 To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them (Isa. 8:20).

But then notice a third thing.

**C. “And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you” (2 Pet. 2:3a).**

There is big money in the cults, and they get it from you, if you become one of them. The leaders profit greatly, and that is one of the reasons they are in it. We can covet many things, but usually when that word is used in Scripture money is involved. People worship money, and it may be a group that promises you financial prosperity. That is very attractive to people. But it is always very important to notice what the false teachers do not, and cannot, promise anyone. And that has to do with the forgiveness of sins, and eternal life.

But now notice the final point:

**IV. THE JUDGMENT OF FALSE TEACHERS (2 Pet. 2:1b, 3b).**

James, in his epistle, had this to say about those who teach the truth:

My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation (James 3:1).

This is how this verse read in the NASB:

Let not many {of you} become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we shall incur a stricter judgment.

Even a child of God should never seek to be a teacher of the Word unless he has been called by God to do so. Why? Because “we shall incur a stricter judgment.” God’s Word is precious to Him. The Holy Spirit led in the writing of Scripture to the extent that the writers used the very words the Holy Spirit directed them to use. Then for anyone, either through ignorance, or for any other reason, distorts the teaching of God’s Word, he will face judgment for that.

Now if people intentionally do it, they are going to face the most severe judgment. Do you remember that our Lord said along this line to the

Pharisees? Listen to His words found in Matt. 23:13:

But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.

The Jews were inclined to trust their scribes and Pharisees and elders just because of the position that they held. But for the most part they were unsaved men. They did not know the Lord, and were not satisfied until they had succeeded in having Him crucified. Not only were they without salvation, but they, by their teaching, kept others from entering the kingdom of God. Think of what they are going to face in the day that they stand before the Lord.

There are many pastors in churches throughout our country who have their titles and their degrees, but who preach a false Gospel, which is not a Gospel at all. They don't believe that the Bible is God's Word. They don't believe that Jesus Christ is God's Son. They don't believe in the vicarious nature of His death, nor do they believe in His resurrection. They can say a lot of complimentary things about Jesus of Nazareth, but they do not know Him as Savior, and they don't think that anyone else needs to know Him as Savior. And it looks like they are getting away with what they are doing.

But look at what the Apostle Peter wrote at the end of verse 1 here in 2 Peter 2, and at the end of verse 3. (Read.) God is amazing in His patience and longsuffering with those who distort His Word, but judgment is most certainly coming. Only that day will reveal what will be the judgment of men who refused to enter into life through Christ, and were responsible for standing in the way so that others could not enter. I would not to be in their shoes.

**Concl:** I remind you again that we are reading an epistle written by a faithful servant of the Lord who knew that he did not have long to live. And we see in this chapter another burden that was on his heart for the people of God especially, but ultimately for all men. The Word of God needs to be handled with the utmost of care. We need to believe that it is God's Word. We need to know its truth, and we need to stand unswervingly for its teaching. Let there be no compromise. We are dealing with matters of eternal life and eternal death, and no one can afford to be wrong here. Let us beware of false teachers, but, at the same time, let us be faithful in spreading the truth of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is no other way of salvation.



## THE JUDGMENT OF GOD

2 Peter 2:4-11

**Intro:** For all of the years of my life, and undoubtedly for many years before that, there has been a strong tendency among many theologians and pastors to emphasize the love of God, and, at the same time to deny anything having to do with the wrath of God. Of course, this was not all that they denied about the Bible, but this was a major point in liberal theology. The result has been largely responsible for the moral decay that we have experienced as a nation, plus the decline in the authority and respect which people have in the past have attributed to the church. Those of us who have continued to teach that God is righteous as well as a God of love, and that He does punish and judge sin, have been considered hard and unloving.

I remember hearing some men say in their writings that the God of the Old Testament was hard and judgmental, but that the God of the New Testament was more loving and gracious, and not inclined toward judgment. Of course many of them taught that God was whatever people wanted to make Him, and so, they said, as people got more refined and educated, their ideas of God got more compassionate.

How anybody can read the NT and say that God is not a God of judgment, is more than I can understand. It just shows how spiritually blind even theologians and pastors can be at times.

I wish some of the men who said those things were still alive today, so they could see what kind of a generation of people we have today. I suppose our generation can get worse, but how could it be classified as anything but violent? And this is where liberal theology has brought us. In changing the character of God, they have practically done away with any idea of sin in the minds of people, because if God is not going to judge, and eventually everyone is to be saved, or delivered from judgment, then what is there for God to judge. We might as well do what we want to do if there is not going to be a hell to avoid, or a divine judgment to face.

The dominant message of 2 Peter, like the epistle of Jude, is that God is a God of judgment. He is a righteous God. He is holy in all of His ways. And what will those liberal pastors do with Paul's teaching found in Acts 17:30 and 31?

30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

31 Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

And what about the words of the Apostle John in Rev. 20:11-15?

11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

That sounds like judgment to me, doesn't it to you? It is terrible judgment.

And Peter firmly believed in a future judgment, and in teaching it, he cited what God had done in the past. There have always been false teachers in the past, and we have them today, and they will be present with us until the end of time. And they will be judged! They think they are getting away now with their perversion of the Word of God, but they aren't! It may look like they are, but judgment day is coming! The Word of God stands true regardless of what men may say to the contrary, even though those men stand in the pulpits of our land, and hold positions in some of our theological seminaries.

So Peter taught that there has been divine judgment in the past, and that there is divine judgment in the present, and there will be a final, more terrible judgment in the future. And first he cited some OT illustrations of judgment.

### **I. SOME ILLUSTRATIONS OF DIVINE JUDGMENT (2 Peter 2:4-8).**

Let me remind you, as I have done in times past, of what the Apostle Paul

said was the value of the OT to us today. You will find his words in Rom. 15:4:

For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

They were “written for our learning.” This is what you and I need every day. We need to be learning from the Bible what God wants us to know. It is a blessing to read good, reliable books about the Bible, but it is better to read the Bible itself. I hope that our time today in the Word will be “for our learning.”

Now one of the pitiful things about so many Christians today is that they don't know the stories of the Bible. And if they don't know the stories, it is true also that they don't know what those stories were meant to teach us. I don't think that I have much trouble, if any, with you because most of you are faithfully reading your Bibles every day.

But let's test ourselves today. In verse 4 Paul mentioned angels who came under the judgment of God. There seems to be a lot of interest in angels these days among many people. But so much of what people believe about angels has no basis in the Bible, and yet the Bible is the only book where we can learn the truth about angels – first of all, that there are angels. In spite of what people may claim, no one alive today has seen an angel. Many claim that they have, but people make a lot of claims these days which are not true. But do you, do I, know what the Bible teaches about angels? Do you know why and how some of them fell under the judgment of God?

The second test has to do with Noah. Do you know the biblical story of Noah, who he was, what he did, and what experience he had with the judgment of God? What does the mention of the name Noah bring to your mind, and where would you find his story in the Bible?

The third test has to do with Sodom and Gomorrah, and Lot. What kind of cities were Sodom and Gomorrah? Who was Lot, and why was he there? What is God's action toward those cities designed to teach us?

What do we need to learn about judgment from all of these?

Well, let's start with angels.

### **A. Angels (2 Pet. 2:4).**

Here we are told that there are angels. The expression, “the angels that sinned,” means that some sinned, and others did not sin. Those who did not sin are called “elect angels.” Cf. 1 Tim. 5:21. Those who sinned were cast down to hell. The word for “hell” is *tartarus*. Here they were chained, and are awaiting their final judgment. This is the only time that Tartarus is mentioned in Scripture, and so it is very difficult to define it specifically. But it must be a part of hell, probably the bottomless pit, or the abyss, where the Devil will be held during the millennial reign of Christ on the earth.

Tartarus may have been in the mind of Jude when in Jude 6 he referred to “the angels which kept not their first estate.” Listen to his words:

And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

So Jude was evidently speaking of the same truth that we have in 2 Pet. 2:4.

We know from Genesis 3 that the Devil was already in rebellion against God before Eve, and then Adam, sinned. Isaiah 14:12-14 is thought by many (and I am among them) to tell us why it was that the Devil and some of the angels were cast out of heaven. Beyond that we are not told a great deal about how there came to be fallen angels as well as elect angels.

But there are angels, and God has already judged them, but the final judgement of angels is yet to come.

That is example #1.

### **B. The old world in the days of Noah (2 Pet. 2:5).**

A whole generation was drowned by a universal flood, a flood that covered the whole earth! The story is given to us in Genesis 6-9. I believe that it was a universal flood because the Bible says so. This is what we read in Gen. 7:19 and 20:

19 And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered.

20 Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered.

And then to confirm that it was universal, we read in the following three verses,

21 And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl,

and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man:

22 All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died.

23 And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark (Gen. 7:21-23).

Why were Noah and his family spared? Well, regarding Noah it is said that he “found grace in the eyes of the Lord,” and that he “was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God” (Gen. 6:8, 9).

I would like to follow on with what our Lord said about “the days of Noah,” but we don’t have the time for that this morning, as interesting and applicable to our generation as it would be. But the point that Peter was making is that there is a judgment that falls upon people who do not know God, and who do not obey God, which is not going to fall upon those of us who know Him, and love Him, and who seek to live to please Him.

The days of Noah were very wicked, and although Noah “a preacher of righteousness,” that is, a preacher of the Gospel, no one paid any attention to him, and no one believed him. This comes as a warning to those in our generation who have no place for God or Christ or the message of the Bible in their hearts.

And then Peter gave a third example of the judgment of God.

### **C. Sodom and Gomorrah, and Lot (2 Pet. 2:6-8).**

Do you know the Bible story concerning Sodom and Gomorrah. Remember that Peter said that he had “not followed cunningly devised fables,” or myths. That applied to the transfiguration of Christ, but that also applied to what the Bible says about angels, and what the Bible says about Noah and the flood, and also what it said about Sodom and Gomorrah. These were not fairy tales; all of these events actually took place. They are a true part of the history of the world even though people like to deny it all. We take our stand on the historical accuracy of the Word of God, don’t we?

We find God making the same distinction in Sodom and Gomorrah that He made at the time of the flood. Here in Sodom and Gomorrah he spared

“just Lot,” as he had delivered Noah at the time of the flood. And Lot was delivered for the same reason that Noah was delivered. He was “just,” meaning that he was “righteous,” before God. He was in Sodom, but he did not live like the men of Sodom, committing the sin with men that carries that city’s name to this very day. He was not a Sodomite in the way he lived.

Now notice how Peter described the sin of sodomy. He said that it was “ungodly” living. He said that it was a “filthy” way of living. And God turned those two cities into ashes to show how abominable that way of life was. In verse 8 or our text we read that were committing “unlawful deeds.” Now it was OK with the people of Sodom, but it was contrary to the law of God, the law by which all people are to be judged.

We have those who tell us today that sodomy is different now, that it is just another lifestyle. And so our politicians defend it, and have legalized it, in spite of the fact that it is an abomination in the sight of God.

Our standards in the US may have changed, and they have – drastically! But God does not change, and His laws do not change. And whether we know it or not, we are going to be judged by His Word, not by our laws. God “condemned” Sodom and Gomorrah “with an overthrow,” and the reason we are told about it in the Bible is because God was “making them an example unto those that after should live ungodly.”

So this is the warning: If America does what Sodom and Gomorrah did, and even if we are not guilty ourselves, but legalize and protect and defend those who do sin in this way, then we can expect the same kind of treatment, judgment of some kind, from God Himself! And when it come, you can be sure it will be devastating. God ordained marriage to be only for a man and a woman. Men with men is not marriage, never has been, and never will be, and the same is true for women with women. It is abominable to God, and is bound to bring judgment. Aids is only a start. We can be certain that there is more to come.

They had it in the Roman Empire, and that mighty Empire was destroyed before the NT was completed. We cannot ignore God and violate His will without paying a tremendous price now, and eternally.

And you remember that God delivered Lot. His soul was “vexed” with what was going on in Sodom. This means that He was *tormented* by what he saw going on in Sodom day after day. And he was different because he

had been saved. He believed the promise of salvation that had been given to his Uncle Abraham, and his sins were forgiven, his heart was changed. But if you remember Abraham's prayer for Sodom, you know that God did not spare that city because there were not even ten people in the city who knew the Lord.

Verse 9 gives us both hope, and a warning.

## **II. OUR HOPE AND A WARNING (2 Pet. 3:8).**

The hope we have, the security that we as believers in Christ have is, that "the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations." He spared Noah, and He spared Lot, and He will spare us. The Lord may come before a dreadful judgment falls upon the world, and if He does, we won't even be here! But even if He doesn't, "He knows how to deliver us from" the judgment when it comes. It is certain that He protects us from the temptations to sin which are all around us, and if we have been spared, let us give all of the glory to Him. But He is concerned about who we are and where we are when He brings judgment upon any city or any nation. Let us be thankful for that.

But look at the latter part of verse 9. Do you think that when God cast the angels into Tartarus, that was the end of their judgment? Absolutely not! Verse 4 tells us that they are there "reserved unto judgment," the final judgments.

Do you think that the people all over the world who died in the flood have had their judgment? Absolutely not! The final judgment is yet to come.

Do you think that the sodomites who were killed, burned alive, when God destroyed those two wicked cities, have experienced all of the judgment they are going to get? That was only the beginning. The final judgment more terrible than anything they experienced then, is yet to come.

Those two boys who killed a teacher and their fellow students, and injured others, may have thought that they were escaping from any penalty for their crimes, but they know better now.

If people could only realize the judgment, the eternal judgment, that awaits all who have not sought God, and from Him the forgiveness of their sins through faith in Christ, perhaps this world would be far better than it is today, and Christians would be busy night and day pointing people to

Christ. Sodomy is not the only sin, but it is one of the worst in God's sight.

So God keeps some from temptation and from the judgment due all of us because of our sins, and he keeps all others for "the day of judgment to be punished." There are only these two possibilities. In which group are you today?

**Concl:** I don't have time to go farther in our text today, but I can't close this service without presenting the Gospel of God's grace. There is only one way for sinners to escape the wrath of an angry God, and that is through faith in Jesus Christ Who died taking the sinner's place. We are all sinners, sinners by nature and sinners by choice. And because we are sinners, we are under divine judgment. But the God of judgment is also the God of love. He has taken pity upon helpless and hopeless sinner, and that is why Christ came. Only through faith in Christ can we be forgiven. Only Christ can change our hearts, and make us right in God's sight. So if you do not know the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, come to Him today and call upon Him to save you. Can God save homosexuals? Yes, and He is the only One Who can! So come to Him, forsaking your sin, seeking His mercy, whoever you are and whatever you have done. Our Savior's promise is that whoever believes in Him, will be saved, and shall not come under the final judgment of God from which there is no escape.

So trust Christ today, and be saved from the penalty of your sins.



**THE DOOM OF APOSTATES AND THEIR FOLLOWERS**

2 Peter 2:9-22

**Intro:** The more anyone reads this epistle with any degree of understanding, the more we see how greatly concerned the Apostle Peter was as he thought of the days ahead in the light of his own approaching death. He could not be satisfied, like Hezekiah was, if things did not get worse in his own lifetime. Instead, he was deeply moved with loving concern that they would be prepared to face the enemy, and to remain faithful to the Lord in spite of all that the Enemy might do through false teachers.

Peter started out in chapter 1, as we have seen, with an impassioned emphasis on the spiritual needs of the believers to whom he was writing. He knew that believers had to be strong and growing stronger if they were going to be able to survive all that was going on, and would continue to go on.

He wanted them to be absolutely certain that the Scriptures were in reality *the Word of God*. If the Devil can get us to doubt Scripture, or to even question what is in the Bible, he is on the way to victory, and we are on the way to defeat. We must take our stand firmly on the solid rock of Scripture.

Then, coming to chapter 2, we find a blistering attack on the false teachers. In fact, he weaves together so many details concerning those teachers and what their real objectives were, that it is hard to separate one section from another in this whole chapter.

We have seen at the beginning of chapter 2 that he said that there would be false teachers at that time just as there had been false teachers in the past, and that they would be very successful. They would bring in “damnable heresies,” even denying, rejecting the Biblical teaching concerning the sovereignty of the Lord and the meaning of His death on the Cross – that it was a substitutionary death for sinners. And so they would bring the whole of Scripture into disrepute. The fact that judgment has not been executed against them makes them even more bold to continue their evil work, but there is an additional fact that they haven’t counted on, and that is that judgment is hanging over them and will in God’s time be executed to the full extent of the warnings that have been given.

Last week we saw that Peter used four OT illustrations of the judgment of God. That having to do with angels, that having to do with Noah and the

flood, and that having to do with Sodom and Gomorrah from which God delivered Lot. And for the encouragement of all believers, we have the statement in verse 9 where I want to begin today. The stories of Noah and Lot indicate that:

The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished (2 Peter 2:9).

But then Peter continued with the theme of judgment, pointing out particular aspects of sin in the lives of false teachers which draw the wrath of God. And here the Apostle Peter made three points.

- 1) Their blasphemous attitudes (vv. 10-12).
- 2) Their corrupt and defiling pleasures (vv. 13-16). And in this section the Apostle Peter referred to another OT incident, this time from the life of Balaam.
- 3) Their hypocrisy (vv. 17-19). They make great claims and promises, but they simply cannot produce. In fact, they produce just the opposite: bondage and corruption and death: eternal death!

As I have said, the Apostle Peter did not confine his comments on any particular subject to just one set of verses, but his expose of the false teachers was so intense and so thorough, that there are some subjects that he deals with more than once.

The final three verses of the chapter are Peter's last warning both the false teachers and to those who might be inclined to follow them.

Now let us look at:

## **I. THE APOSTLE PETER'S CONDEMNATION OF THE FALSE TEACHERS (2 Peter 2:9-12).**

Verse 12 forms a transition between the first part of the chapter and the last part of the chapter, the point being as we move on in the chapter that "The Lord knoweth how ... to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished."

And the first point is:

### **A. Because they are blasphemers (vv. 10-12).**

Going back to the first verse here in chapter 2, look again at the statement, "even denying the Lord." The Lord is the Lord Jesus Christ, but the word

which Peter used for Lord is the Greek word, δεσπότην. We get our English word *despot* from this. It speaks of our Lord as *the One Who has supreme authority*. This is why the NIV has translated it *the sovereign Lord*.

False teachers are a law unto themselves. They do not recognize any greater authority than themselves. They are the masters of interpretation, and when they choose they have the liberty of going beyond the written Word of God. They “despise government.” That is, they despise any kind of authority, from God on down. “They are not afraid to speak evil (the verb is *blaspheme*) dignitaries,” which is most likely a word which refers to angels.

A “railing accusation” in verse 11 is *a blasphemous charge*. And “speaking evil of the things that they understand not” is again the Greek verb *to blaspheme*.

So Peter used some form of the word *blaspheme* in verses 10, 11, and 12. What does it mean *to blaspheme*? Toward God it is the equivalent of cursing, or of taking His Name in vain. Toward fellow creatures (angels and men) it is to ridicule them, and to slander them, to charge that they are nothing and worthy of no respect. False teachers show no respect for anyone but themselves, and for those who follow them.

When Peter called them “natural brute beasts” he was saying that they were unregenerate, unreasonable, animals. And that is why he said that they blasphemed “things that they understood not.” Paul said in 1 Cor 2:14,

But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Just because a person claims to be teaching the Bible, does not mean that he is a true Christian. And if he is not a Christian, he does not have the ability to understand the truth of God.

And at the end of this section the Apostle Peter touched upon judgment again when he said that they “shall utterly perish in their own corruption.”

And now we come to Peter’s second charge against the false teachers. They will be judged:

**B. Because of their corrupt and defiling pleasures (vv. 13-16).**

Let me remind you at this point of the words of the Lord Jesus in John 3:18-20:

18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

The night and sin have always been connected. “Men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” “Night life” is the time for sinning, and it always has been.

But notice what verse 13 tells us that these false teachers “count it pleasure to riot in the day time.” “To riot” means to indulge in pleasures of the flesh which are destructive to one’s body and mind. They boldly do sinful things. They are shameless. “Sporting themselves” means that this is what they delight to do. “Spots they are and blemishes,” meaning that they disgrace themselves by what they do while they deceive others, apparently not knowing that they are deceiving themselves at the same time because they are spiritually blind!

But notice something really amazing here: “while they feast with you.” This in all likelihood speaks of the love feasts, or feasts of fellowship, which believers engaged in. Doesn’t this remind you of the way that people in the OT soothed their consciences when they were engaging in idolatry with all of the sin connected with that. They would offer their sacrifices to the heathen gods, and then go to the temple to offer their sacrifices to the Lord. Even Aaron, after he had made the golden calf for the people to worship said, “To morrow is a feast to the Lord” (Ex. 32:5).

How brazen people can be in their sins, as though offering their sacrifices to the Lord, would exclude them from any judgment for the sinful things that they do.

But notice verse 14 where Peter wrote, “Having eyes full of adultery.” The expression actually means, “Having eyes full of the adulteress.” Listen to what Michael Green had to say about this expression in his commentary:

They lust after every girl they see; they view every female as a

potential adulteress. . . It becomes impossible for them to look at any woman without reflecting on her likely sexual performance, and on the possibility of persuading her to gratify their lusts (p. 122).

When people turn their backs upon the Lord, and seek to corrupt the Word of God, there is no limit to the depth of sin into which they may fall. And sin never satisfies. So people go deeper and deeper into sin, and bring upon themselves greater and greater judgment from the Lord.

And not only do we corrupt ourselves with sin, but we also corrupt others. Peter called it “beguiling unstable souls.” This means *enticing others who are not strong and steadfast*.

Sin is also like a chain. One sin leads to another. A person who is lustful for one thing, will be lustful for other things. And so it should not surprised us that all of the sins mentioned thus far leads to coveting after money.

And this brings us to what Peter had to say about Balaam. Do you know the story of Balaam, and how Balak the king of the Moabites promised to reward him well if he would pronounce a curse upon the children of Israel? And he wanted to do it, but God would not allow him to do it. When Balak sent princes, the Lord told him to go with them, but that he could only do what the Lord told him to say. You will find this story in Numbers 22.

The Lord was angry that Balaam went with the princes of Moab, and the angel of the Lord met Balaam as he rode on his donkey, and stood in the way. The donkey saw the angel of the Lord, but Balaam didn't see Him. So Balaam started beating his donkey because she would not go where Balaam wanted her to go. And this is the conversation that followed:

27 And when the ass saw the angel of the LORD, she fell down under Balaam: and Balaam's anger was kindled, and he smote the ass with a staff.

28 And the LORD opened the mouth of the ass, and she said unto Balaam, What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times?

29 And Balaam said unto the ass, Because thou hast mocked me: I would there were a sword in mine hand, for now would I kill thee.

30 And the ass said unto Balaam, Am not I thine ass, upon which thou hast ridden ever since I was thine unto this day? was I ever

went to do so unto thee? And he said, Nay.

31 Then the LORD opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and he bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face.

32 And the angel of the LORD said unto him, Wherefore hast thou smitten thine ass these three times? behold, I went out to withstand thee, because thy way is perverse before me:

33 And the ass saw me, and turned from me these three times: unless she had turned from me, surely now also I had slain thee, and saved her alive.

34 And Balaam said unto the angel of the LORD, I have sinned; for I knew not that thou stoodest in the way against me: now therefore, if it displease thee, I will get me back again.

35 And the angel of the LORD said unto Balaam, Go with the men: but only the word that I shall speak unto thee, that thou shalt speak. So Balaam went with the princes of Balak (Num. 22:27-35).

Balaam loved money, and the Apostle Paul later said that “the love of money is the root of all evil” (2 Tim. 6:10) – all kinds of evil!

So again Peter produced an illustration from the OT that would have kept the false teachers from such grievous sins, but they did not have the ability to understand the truth. They were children under the curse of God. And at the beginning of verse 13 judgment is emphasized again where Peter said that they “shall receive the reward of unrighteousness.”

Lucille was raised in Harrisburg, Arkansas which is just 40 or 50 miles from Memphis, Tennessee. The pastor of the Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis at that time was Dr. Robert G. Lee. And he had a sermon which he preached many, many times, and people always filled the church to hear it, even though they had heard it many times before. The title of the sermon was, “Pay Day Some Day.”

This is what Peter was teaching: “Pay Day Some Day.” Nobody gets away with sin. God may delay even temporal judgments which often makes people more bold in their sin. But a day of judgment is coming, “Pay Day Some Day.” And when it does, it will be far more terrible than anyone can imagine. How foolish people are not to take refuge under the atoning work of our Lord because that is the only way to escape the judgment of sinners which is certain to come.

But let me hurry on to my third point under the Apostle Peter’s condemna-

tion of the false teachers. It is this. They are to be condemned because:

### C. Because they are hypocrites (vv. 17-19).

They promise life-giving water, but they have none. They are clouds, not bright and hopeful, but dark and indicative of judgment. And again Peter spoke of judgement: "To whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever."

Their words are devoid of the truth, and yet they promised much which they could not deliver, alluring "through the lusts of the flesh, though much wantonness (unrestrained wicked living). This was supposed to be liberty which the false teachers promised, but in reality it was bondage. It was our Lord who said, "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin" (John 8:34), the bondservant of sin from which no man is able to set himself free. No person who is a slave of sin can possibly set others free because he is not free himself.

In the last three verses of the chapter we have:

## II. PETER'S CONCLUDING WORD ABOUT FALSE TEACHERS

(2 Peter 2:20-22).

WHO DID PETER HAVE IN MIND?

CF ACTS 20:29-30. "ALSO OF YOUR OWN SELVES..."

He was not talking about teachers who were saved, and then who lost their salvation. We know that there is no such possibility according to Scripture. There are those who profess for a time, and then fall away, but no person who is truly saved can ever become unsaved again. Or to state it another way, no person who has been born again, can become unborn.

What, then, was Peter talking about here?

Well, Judas would be a good example. Or Balaam was another example. We have no evidence that Judas was guilty of sexual immorality, but it is very possible that Balaam was involved in immorality because he brought Israel into idolatry and immorality. Listen to what the Lord said to the church at Pergamos:

14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate (Rev. 2:14-15).

It is possible for people to make a profession of faith, to be brought in

among the people of God, and to learn a great deal about the Lord Jesus Christ. And so they are spared the corruption that comes to those who live in the world. But if a person becomes entangled again in the world and its sin, “the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.”

And then read verse 21.

How do we explain such things that we all have seen happen when people come into the fellowship of believers, and then depart, never to come back. Prov. 26:11 gives us our answer: “As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly.” The last proverb is not from Scripture, but was evidently selected from secular writings.

The Lord brought dogs and pigs together in the Matthew 7:6 where we read that He said,

Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

Both were considered to be unclean animals by the Jews.

So the false teachers were dogs at heart who had not been changed, and like pigs who still were attracted to the mud.

**Concl:** The Lord Jesus on one occasion, said this in His teaching, and it seems that the Apostle Peter may have had our Lord’s words in mind as he wrote the concluding verses of this chapter. This is what the Lord said about a man who had been demon-possessed:

43 When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none.

44 Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished.

45 Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation (Matt. 12:43-45).

You see, it is not enough that we turn from the sins that we once were living in, and start going to church. That is not salvation. Salvation is a work of God in our hearts by which our hearts are changed. He draws us to Christ, and we trust in Him. When that happens we believe that Christ was and is the Son of God. We believe that by His death He made atone-



ment for our sins. We believe the Bible, and want to learn more about God through the Word. So it behooves each one of us to do as the Apostle Peter said we should do in the first chapter of this epistle: (Read 2 Peter 1:8-11.) God wants us to be able to say what the Apostle Paul said about himself in the words recorded in 2 Tim. 1:12,

For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.

Don't be satisfied until you know that you are saved. Come to Christ. He alone can save you.

**Explanation for the two sets of notes on 2 Peter #11:**

I was unable to print the notes which I had typed up because of problems with my computer, and so I wrote out what I could remember on my typewriter, and I preached from the typewritten notes. But after my computer was repaired I was able to type up the notes which I had originally prepared. This is the reason for the two sets of notes for #11 in this series. I am keeping both for the time when I will edit Sermon #11.

12/10/99