

## Sunday Morning Message

February 28, 2021

*2 Peter 2:1 – 22 -Avoiding False Prophets by the Grace of God*

*Series - Experiencing God's Grace in the Midst of Suffering*

*Text – 2 Peter 2:1 - 22*

Congregational Reading – 2 Peter 2:20 - 22

### Introduction to the Series

The writer of this letter is identified as Peter. Peter was an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, who was not only one of the twelve, but also a member of the inner circle of the Lord, which also include James and John. Peter knew a little something about growing in the Lord. Early on in his apostleship, Peter would often try to do things His way. He was a bit impulsive, and somewhat outspoken. Peter's famous failure in the flesh came when he denied knowing the Lord, and this immediately following his self-confident boasting that he would never do it.

Peter, however, didn't stay defeated. He got back up, and in the power of the Holy Spirit, was greatly used of the Lord. His message at Pentecost yielded the fruit of 3000 souls trusting the Lord Jesus. Peter was also used of the Lord to lead Cornelius, a Gentile man, to faith in Christ.

Here in this second general epistle or letter from Peter, he is writing near the end of his life. We estimate that the date of this writing was around 66 AD. He will be martyred at the hands of Nero shortly after this epistle was written, probably around 67 AD. It was most likely written from Rome. Tradition tells us that Peter was crucified upside-down, having requested this form of crucifixion because he felt unworthy to be put to death in the same manner as the Lord.

The theme of this letter is much the same as Peter's first epistle. He is encouraging believers to remain faithful to the Lord even under incredibly difficult circumstances. Additional emphasis in 2 Peter is given to the exposure of false teachers as well as to the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Another significant difference that should be pointed out is that the scope of this letter seems to have been intended for a much broader audience than 1 Peter. That first epistle was written to a specific region in Asia Minor (present day Turkey) and is referred to in this letter as being previously written to these same recipients, but this letter is addressed to all believers, presumably beyond the geographical boundaries of the first letter. Of course, the Holy Spirit intended that both letters be included within the Canon of Scripture and would thus be written for the benefit of all believers.

## Introduction

In the first part of chapter one, we learned that there are seven things that God states that we should diligently add to our faith: these things are virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity. The passage promises us that if we add these things, we will be fruitful, secure, and rewarded.

In the remainder of chapter one, Peter gives them some reminders:

1. He reminds them of these seven truths from the beginning of the chapter, and tells them that he will keep reminding them about them.
2. He reminds them that he was an eyewitness to the glory of the Lord.
3. He reminds them that they have a more sure word of prophecy – the Word of God.

## Transition

Now as we enter into chapter two, we see a dramatic change in the tone of the letter. Peter uses some very strong language to warn them about people who would try to lead them astray.

In this chapter, Peter will expose and warn these struggling, first-century believers about the many false prophets and teachers that existed in their world.

### I. The Inevitable Existence of False Teachers Among Them (vs. 1 – 3)

Discuss the Parable of the Tares of the Field (Matthew 13:24 – 30; 36 – 43). Also in vs. 31 and 32, the parable of the Mustard Seed; and, in vs. 33 – 35, the Parable of the Leaven. Each of these parables demonstrate that evil will be sowed in by the devil.

*"Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." (Jude 1:3-4)*

### II. The Ultimate Ending of False Teachers (vs. 4 – 9)

Peter shows them that these false teachers will ultimately get their due, and meet their end, just as many others in the past had.

#### A. Fallen Angels (v. 3)

*"And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God*

*came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown." (Genesis 6:1-4)*

*"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." (Jude 1:6)*

It is possible that these devils (demons) will be released to torment the inhabitants of the earth in the Great Tribulation Period:

*"And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit." (Revelation 9:1-2)*

Note – there are myriads of fallen angels that are not chained today and are free to roam about in the world seeking whom they may devour. Someday, they will be thrown into the Lake of Fire.

**B. The Flood (v. 4)**

**C. The Filthy (vs. 6 – 8)**

The homosexual perversion that existed in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah in the time of Lot was so blatant and so bad that God finally destroyed the entire place.

**Note to the Faithful** - from v. 9 – Both with the Flood and in the case of Lot, God's grace was manifested in the fact that He spared Noah and his family, as well as Lot and his family. True believers, by the grace of God, will be able to recognize these errors and will be kept by the power of God.

*"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." (1 Peter 1:3-5)*

*"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:" (Philippians 1:6)*

You cannot lose your salvation – the life that believers have received is both *everlasting* and *eternal*.

*"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise," (Ephesians 1:13)*

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*"And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."*  
(Ephesians 4:30)

### **III. Some Unmistakable Elements of False Teaching (vs. 10 – 22)**

We have already seen in verse one that these false teachers bring in damnable heresises, and they deny the Lord.

#### **A. They Walk after the Flesh (v. 10)**

"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." (Galatians 5:19-21)

#### **B. They Despise Government (v. 10)**

This word, "κυριότητος" (from κυριότης – *kyriotēs*), is translated "dominion" in Ephesians, Colossians, and Jude. It likely refers to spiritual authorities.

It has been my observation that false teachers are in rebellion to all authority. They will not submit to the Lordship of Christ, the spiritual authority within the church, or the secular authority of earthly governments. They are rebellious by nature. They resist any authority that tries to control them. They are "self-willed." A strong will is a characteristic of those who are controlled by the flesh. Paul stated:

*"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not."* (Romans 7:18)

#### **C. They Speak Evil of Dignities (v. 10)**

The word here for dignities is "δόξας" (from δόξα – *doxa*), which means "glory," or "glorious ones," or "exalted ones." This is an obscure word, and I can't be sure exactly what is meant here. It could be referring to angels, or it could mean that they speak evil against anyone who is in authority, whether it be secular authority or spiritual authority.

*"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers (ἐξουσίας - authority). For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he*

*beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." (Romans 13:1-4 )*

Notice that these false teachers, "speak evil of things that they do not understand." Do you see the pride that is behind all of this evil speaking? Be careful about opening your mouth against something or someone that you are not 100% sure about. Stop repeating things that have not been proven to be true.

*"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers." (Ephesians 4:29)*

#### **D. They Live for Pleasure (vs. 13 – 14)**

Notice the words, "pleasure," "sporting," and "feast." These words, individually do not necessarily always indicate sin in themselves, but they certainly point to a person who is a "lover of pleasure more than a lover of God" (1 Timothy 3:4)

Notice – "eyes full of adultery." They cannot keep their eyes off of your wives. They are not content with the wife that they have, but they want your wife, and they will take her if given the opportunity.

#### **E. They are Covetous (vs. 14 – 16)**

They don't only covet your wife; they covet your wealth. Notice in vs. 15 and 16 the reference to Balaam.

Balaam was the "prophet" who was hired by the Moabites to curse the children of Israel (Numbers 22). He is not permitted to curse Israel, but he cozies up to the king of Moab, and eventually figures out a way for the Moabites to infiltrate the camp of Israel by sending some of the heathen Moabite women into the camp to sleep with the Israelite men.

*"Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core." – (Jude 1:11)*

#### **F. They Promote a Hyper-Grace Lifestyle (17 – 19)**

Notice these people have nothing real to offer you – zero true spiritual value. They are clouds that have no rain. They speak big words that have nothing in them; they are empty.

Notice the words, "allure," "lusts," and "wantonness" (unbridled lusts). These people are like the ones today that say, "you are under grace, you can do anything that your heart desires." There is no such thing as sin.

I am a big believer in grace, but grace will not give you a license to sin:

*"For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another." (Galatians 5:13)*

*"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Romans 6:1-2 KJV)*

## Conclusion

The final verses of this chapter sum up what is happening with these false teachers. They were exposed to the truth, and they even were closely associated with those who were genuine believers; but they were never truly converted, and they tried to lead those who were astray.

*"These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit." (Jude 1:19)*

Wiersbe - "There is no indication that the false teachers had ever experienced the new birth. They had *knowledge* of salvation and could use the language of the church, but they lacked that true saving experience with the Lord. At one time they had even received the Word of God (2 Peter 2:21), but then they turned away from it. *They never trusted Christ and became His sheep.*"<sup>1</sup>

These false teachers can often point back to some kind of religious experience, but if you pin them down and inquire about, it never involves a repentance of sin and receiving of Jesus Christ as Lord of their lives. They made have been washed up on the outside like the pig in v. 22, but they were never truly converted and cleansed on the inside.

God said that it was better for them if they had not known the truth.

How about you? Have you been washed on the inside by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ?

Can you point back to a time when you:

1. Realized that you are sinner.
2. Understood that judgment awaited you because of your sin.
3. Believed that Jesus Christ who died and shed his blood for your sins.
4. Received the free gift of salvation by placing your faith in Christ: repenting of your sin and calling upon Him for forgiveness.

That is what salvation is. If that is not how you became a believer, you had better examine yourself to see whether or not you are truly saved.

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<sup>1</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 460.