

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

AUGUST 6TH - 7TH, 2022 // BOOK OF 2 PETER

FALSE PROPHETS (2 PETER 2:1-3)

In the OT, there were **prophets of God who spoke as they were carried along** by the Holy Spirit (1:21).

- But there were also **“false prophets”** who pretended to speak for God.
- Just as there were **false prophets pretending to speak for God amongst the people of Israel**, so also there **will be false teachers** in the church (vs. 1).

False teachers bring in **“destructive heresies”** that destroy the body of Christ because **these teachings tell lies and spread falsehood**.

- The focal point of most heresies almost always deals with a denial of, **“the Master who bought them”**—a denial of the identity, work, and **deity of Jesus**.
- The phrase **“bought them”** doesn't mean that these false teachers were Christians; it just means that even though **Christ's death provided for their salvation**, they refused it.

HERESY HUNTERS & CHRISTIAN CANCEL CULTURE

We must be so careful with **accusations of heresy, false teaching, and false prophets** in the body of Christ.

- Peter is not talking about **differences in debatable doctrinal issues (details of Christ's return, sign gifts, women in ministry, ministry methodology, or how to interpret certain passages)**.
- Peter is talking about those who **(A) deny the identity & work of Jesus** and **(B) attempt to normalize immorality and illicit sexual activity** within the Church.

Many people will be attracted to false teachers and their **“depraved ways”** (vs. 2).

- Perhaps because in our fallen state, we prefer a message that tells us **we don't have to change or surrender our fleshly desires** to a higher authority than ourselves.
- When false teachers are at work and when crowds are following them, the way of truth is maligned—**God's holy name** and honor are disgraced.

THERE ARE THREE THINGS THAT CHARACTERIZE A FALSE TEACHER (VS. 3):

1. They're motivated by **personal gain, greed, and selfishness**.
2. They speak **“made-up stories”**—the teaching they bring isn't truth; it's **appealing lies they know people will latch onto**.
3. They are **destined for destruction**—God's wrath will be poured out on them in full measure.

THE GODLY & UNRIGHTEOUS (2 PETER 2:4-10A)

The false teaching occurring in **Peter's day was a denial of Christ's return** and His judgment.

- Verses 4-9 give **three illustrations to prove that God has judged in the past** and will judge again in the future.
- These examples gradually reduce in scale, from **the cosmic (angels), to the worldwide (flood), to the local (Sodom & Gomorrah)**.

JUDGMENT #1: THE ANGELS (VS. 4)

At the time, before the world as we know it, all of the angels served God. But then, some of them rebelled against God and were cast out of Heaven.

- As a result, **God judged them by setting them in chains of darkness** until their time of final judgment (**some of them are unbound and active in the earth now as demons**).
- No one is **exempt from judgment**, and even when judgment is delayed, it is still very real.

JUDGMENT #2: THE WORLD DURING THE FLOOD (VS. 5)

The people of **Noah's day rejected God and rebelled** against Him.

- Because they **rebelled against Him and mocked Noah** (who was God's **“preacher of righteousness”**), God brought the flood.
- The wicked people in **Noah's day were warned of God's coming judgment for a long time** (maybe even up to 120 years).

JUDGMENT #3: SODOM & GOMORRAH (VS. 6)

Genesis 18 tells us of two cities in the ancient world that were full of **debauchery, depravity, and sexual immorality on a massive scale**.

- The **primary sin of Sodom** was homosexuality (Lev. 18:22; Rom. 1:24-27; 1 Cor. 6:9).
- Even though this sin was normalized and celebrated in these cities, **God's judgment was against the proud and prosperous**.

Even though **God's righteous judgment will be carried out against the wicked**, the righteous will be delivered (vs. 7-9).

- God protected Noah and those who believed his message, and **God rescued righteous Lot from the judgment of Sodom**.
- **“Righteous”** is used 3 times to describe Lot, which seems surprising to **anyone who has read the book of Genesis**.

Lot was a righteous man, but **he intentionally surrounded himself with wickedness**, and it tormented his soul (vs. 8).

- Lot's soul was tormented, but **he failed** to follow through with godly actions and separate himself and his family from the ungodliness of Sodom.
- The Lord delivered Lot because of his righteous soul, **yet Lot lost everything** else because of his too-close association with those wicked cities.

Just as He did with **Lot and Noah**, God knows how to **rescue, protect, and save the godly from the temptation** and trials of this corrupt and evil world (vs. 9).

- God also knows how to keep **the unrighteous under punishment for the final day of judgment**—especially those who are proud and indulge in **the lusts of the flesh** (vs. 10).

BOLD, ARROGANT PEOPLE (2 PETER 2:10B-16)

The **first characteristic of false teachers is their pride**, which is their basis for despising authority.

- These false teachers, with their overinflated view of themselves, their own intellect, and their own

spirituality, are **not afraid to speak against God's angels or perhaps even God Himself** (vs. 10b).

- It seems that Peter is referring to teachers who dismiss and **deny spiritual activity** (or those who **“slander glorious ones”** by fabricating their own visions of angels).

Faithful angels, “who are greater in might and power,” **don't slander** or exaggerate in what they say, even against false prophets (vs. 11).

- But these false teachers don't function in the spirit at all—**they are like irrational animals** (vs. 12).
- They have **no understanding** of God's glory, truth, or judgment, so they slander those things by twisting them, distorting them, and making up falsehoods that **appeal to their own desires**.

In so doing, these **false teachers** will be paid back with harm for the harm they have done (vs. 13). **What harm have these teachers done?**

- They **“delight in their deceptions”** while they feast amongst Christians in broad daylight (vs. 13)—they claim to be among the people of God, but desire to lead others astray into their falsehood.
- They have **“eyes full of adultery”** (vs. 14)—sexual sin marks their lives and their teaching.

They seduce **“unstable people”**—the most vulnerable victims of false teaching are **new, immature, or hurting Christians**.

- They have **“hearts trained in greed”**—what they are after is **not God's glory and others' salvation**, but their own personal gain.
- Numbers 22-24 **recounts the story of Balaam, a prophet whose desire for money** led him from the right path.

Balaam was willing to **pursue fame and fortune** (the **“wages of wickedness,”** vs. 15) instead of obedience to God.

- As a result, **he was rebuked by God through a donkey!**
- For a donkey to rebuke the prophet's madness reflects not only on the foolishness of Balaam, but also on that of **all false teachers attempting to oppose God** and harm God's people.

SPRINGS WITHOUT WATER (2 PETER 2:17-22)

“SPRINGS WITHOUT WATER, MISTS DRIVEN BY A STORM” (VS. 17)

Regardless of how **polished, entertaining, and captivating false teachers** may be in their presentation; or how appealing to our flesh their ideas may be, their message is lifeless.

- They're as **useless to our spiritual nourishment as a dried-up spring** that can't give water or clouds that don't bring life-giving rain.
- The **gloom of darkness** has been reserved for them.
- They utter **boastful words** (vs. 18)—words that seem to promise life, prosperity, and freedom.
- But those words are **completely empty and devoid of real spiritual life and power**.
- Their allure is that they cater to the **“fleshly desires and debauchery”** of **weak Christians** who have “barely escaped from those who live in error.”
- The promise they give is **freedom** (vs. 19)—whether it's sexual liberation or freedom from any fear of divine judgment in the afterlife.

True freedom is never found in **surrendering ourselves** fully to the desires or lusts of the flesh.

- Very quickly, we will find that we are actually **“slaves to corruption”** since we lose the ability to say no to what our desires want, even when **our desires seek that which is harmful and hurtful to ourselves** and others.
- True freedom can only be found by **the Spirit of the Lord** (2 Cor. 3:17).

False teachers are not true Christians, but at some point, it seems that **Peter says these false teachers had some knowledge** of Jesus, escaped the world's impurity, and then **became entangled in it again** (vs. 20).

- It's better for a person to have never known a thing about Jesus than to hear some truth, hold onto it for a season, and then **later reject it** (vs.21).
- Greater revelation has a **greater accountability**.

It's like a dog that returns to his **own vomit** or a pig that returns to **wallowing in the mud** (vs. 22).

- You can dress up a dog or a pig in clothes and **train them to behave like human children**, but ultimately, you can't change their nature.
- Someone who has not truly had **their nature changed by Christ** might get domesticated & dressed up to look like a Christian but eventually will return to their vomit of the **flesh and the world**.

“SPRINGS WITHOUT WATER”

Beware of any teaching that...

1. Shifts the heart of the **gospel message away from sin and redemption** and onto **something else**.
 2. Redefines **historic Christian terms** and challenges the **core doctrines of Christian teaching**.
 3. Elevates **subjective feelings, experiences, and stories** over the **absolute truth of Scripture**.
 4. Has a **lowered view of the Bible and judges which parts of it are true** based on 21st century, **Western sensibilities**.
- Regardless of how **appealing any message may seem to our flesh**, if it's not true, it will **have no spiritual life or power**.
 - The freedom it promises will actually be **slavery, and the satisfaction** it promises will be temporary.
 - God will **judge the unrighteous and ungodly**. Hell is real, and Jesus is coming back.
 - God does care about how **we practice our sexuality**. His design is for sex to be between **one man and one woman in the context of marriage**.
 - Our **world (and maybe even your flesh)** doesn't like both of those truths—but changing, omitting, twisting, or adding to God's word and then leading others astray to do the same is a **serious offense against God** that will have **eternal consequences**.

IN THE MIDST OF THIS BROKEN WORLD'S CORRUPTION...

- Are you **Lot?** Or are you **Noah?**
- Are you **tormented by the lies and wickedness**, but failing to be **obedient and separate yourself from it?**
- Or are you **obedient to God** regardless of the **corruption around you?**