

2 Peter Chapter 2

Verses 1-21

This chapter is very like the book of Jude.

So serious is the danger from false prophets and false teachers in this current dispensation, that the Holy Spirit inspired both men to address these issues near the end of their lives.

As if to warn their generation and all generations that would follow.

Verses 1-3

The opposite of true revelation is the message of “false prophets” and “false teachers” who deceive God’s flock and “bring in damnable heresies.”

These heresies (unorthodox teachings), include an open denial of Christ Himself.

“Denying the Lord that brought them”, indicates that Christ’s atonement potentially extends to all men, including these false teachers who reject Him.

Therefore, they will experience “destruction”, because they themselves will be deceived by their own teaching and continue to reject the “way of truth.”

2 Peter 2:1 "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction."

In the last lesson, we saw holy men of God moved upon by the Holy Spirit of God writing to the believers, messages to be taken to heart.

In this lesson, we see some who have wandered from the truth, and were proclaiming themselves to be prophets.

Their message is false.

We know there is a terrible punishment awaiting those who teach false doctrines.

Peter described false teachers in detail in this chapter so that Christians would always recognize their characteristics and methods.

The greatest sin of Christ-rejecters and the most damning work of Satan is misrepresentation of the truth and its consequent deception.

Nothing is more wicked than for someone to claim to speak for God to the salvation of souls when in reality he speaks for Satan to the damnation of souls. (Deut. 1:13-18; 18:20; Jer. 23; Ezek. 13; Matt. 7:15; 23:1-36; 24:4-5; Rom. 16:17; 2 Cor. 11:13-14; Gal. 3:1-2; 2 Tim. 4:3-4).

“Among the people”:

“The people” is used in the New Testament of Israel (Acts 26:17, 23).

Peter’s point, though, is that Satan has always endeavored to infiltrate groups of believers with the deceptions of false teachers (John 8:44).

Since Eve, he has been in the deceit business.

“Privily shall bring in damnable heresies”:

The false teachers parade themselves as Christian pastors, teachers, and evangelists (Jude 4).

“Heresies” means self-designed religious lies which lead to division and faction (1 Corinthians 11:19; Gal. 5:20).

The Greek word for “destructive” basically means damnation.

This word is used 6 times in this letter and always speaks of the final damnation (see verses 1-3; 3:7, 16).

This is why it is so tragic when a church makes a virtue out of the toleration of unscriptural teachings and aids in the name of love and unity (see 2 Thess. 3:14; 1 Tim. 4:1-5; Titus 3:9-11).

1 John 4:1-3 "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:" "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."

We see, in the above Scriptures, the way to determine whether the message is of God, or not.

Matthew 24:24 "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if [it were] possible, they shall deceive the very elect."

We see from this that many will be deceived.

The only way not to be deceived is for us to study the Word of God, and check everything out by that Word.

If the message elevates Jesus up to the fullness of the godhead, it is true.

“Denying the Lord”:

This phrase exposes the depth of the crime and guilt of the false teachers.

This unusual Greek word for “Master” or “Lord” appears 10 times in the New Testament and means one who has supreme authority, whether human authority or divine authority.

Peter here warns that false prophets deny the sovereign lordship of Jesus Christ.

Though their heresies may include the denial of the virgin birth, deity, bodily resurrection and second coming of Christ, the false teachers’ basic error is that they will not submit their lives to the rule of Christ.

All false religions have an erroneous Christology.

“That bought them”:

The terms which Peter used here are more analogical than theological, speaking of a human master over a household.

The master bought slaves, and the slaves owed the master allegiance as their sovereign.

For an Old Testament parallel (see Deut. 32:5-6), where God is said to have brought Israel, though they rejected Him.

Doctrinally, this analogy can be viewed as responsibility for submission to God which the false teachers had refused.

Beyond this, they are probably claiming that they were Christians, so that the Lord had bought them actually and personally.

With some sarcasm, Peter mocks such a claim by writing of their coming damnation.

Thus, the passage is describing the sinister character of the false teachers who claim Christ, but deny His lordship over their lives.

“Swift destruction”:

This refers to either physical death or judgment at the return of Christ (see Proverbs 29:1; and 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10).

2 Peter 2:2 "And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of."

"Pernicious" in the verse above, means spiritual ruin, or loss.

It is so strange to me that more people will believe a lie than will believe the Truth.

It is so interesting to me that many other religions today, such as the Muslim, believe the Christians are heathen.

Those, who do not believe in Jesus, think we are evil for following Him.

Many people will profess to be Christians but deny Christ's lordship over their lives, refusing to live as obedient servants to Christ and His Word, following instead the lusts of the flesh, the world, and the devil.

Such nominal Christians tragically will be included in the Lord's condemnation of hypocrites at the judgment (Matt. 7:21-23; Jude 4, 7).

Denying the lordship of Christ while claiming to be a believer destructively infects other people and discredits the gospel.

1 Corinthians 1:18 "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."

"The way of truth shall be evil spoken of":

The world mocks and scoffs at the gospel of Jesus Christ because of nominal Christians who do not follow the Lord they claim, and have been unmasked as hypocritical people.

Verses 3-9

Future universal "judgment" of this world is illustrated by the reference to the "flood" (Greek kataklusmon, "cataclysm"), of Noah's day which came upon the "old world," that is, the antediluvian world.

The universal extent of the Flood is assumed by the author as an illustration of coming universal judgment at the end of this age.

The deliverance of "Lot" from "Sodom and Gomorrah" is used to illustrate the fact that God will deliver His own from the coming universal judgment.

2 Peter 2:3 "And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not."

"And through covetousness":

That is, uncontrolled greed.

Peter observed that the underlying motive of the false teachers was not love of the truth, but love of money (see verse 14).

They exploited people through their lies.

"Covetousness":

This means to desire something that belongs to someone else.

They actually seek after these lies.

Those who choose a lie over Jesus will find damnation awaiting them.

The following is the only reason why He has not already destroyed them.

"Feigned":

In the verse above means artificial or fictitious.

We should not be amazed that they hang on to the false doctrine and believe it, before they believe the Truth.

Jesus was the Truth, and they did not believe Him.

His followers should expect no better treatment than our leader got.

"Whose judgment ... lingereth not":

The principle that God is going to damn false teachers was set in place in eternity past, repeated throughout the Old Testament, and is "not idle" in the sense that it has not worn out or become ineffective.

It is still potent and will come to pass (see Jude 4).

"Their damnation slumbereth not":

Peter is personifying destruction as if destruction were an executioner who is fully awake and alert, ready to act.

Because God is by nature a God of truth, he will judge all liars and deceivers.

2 Peter 2:4 "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast [them] down to hell, and delivered [them] into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;"

"If":

This is better translated “since”, because there is no doubt about the history of judgment which Peter is about to recount.

Verses 4-10, are one long sentence with the conclusion to the “since” clause which is beginning in verse 9).

Lest anyone think that God is too loving and merciful to judge the wicked false teachers and their deceived people, Peter gives 3 powerful illustrations of past divine judgment on the wicked.

These illustrations set the precedents for the future and final judgment on liars and deceivers.

Though God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ezek. 33:11), He must judge wickedness because His holiness requires it (2 Thess. 1:7-9).

1. Angels that did not keep their own domain. Before the flood (verse 4; Gen 6:1-3), who left their normal state and lusted after women (verse 4; see Jude 6);
2. Spared not the old world (verse 5; Genesis chapters 6 – 8);
3. Before the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (verse 6; Gen. 19).

“Angels that sinned”:

These angels (according to Jude 6), “did not keep their own domain,” i.e., they entered men who promiscuously cohabited with women.

Apparently, this is a reference to the fallen angels of Genesis 6 (sons of God):

“Cast them down to hell”:

Peter borrowed a word from Greek mythology for hell, “tartarus”.

The Greeks taught that tartarus was a place lower than Hades reserved for the most wicked of human beings, gods, and demons.

The Jews eventually came to use this term to describe the place where fallen angels were sent.

The demons feared going there and begged Jesus during His life on earth not to send them there (Matt. 8:29; Luke 8:31).

Not all demons are bound.

Many roam the heavens and earth (Rev. 12:7-9).

Some are temporarily bound.

These were, because of their sin (in Genesis 6), permanently bound in darkness.

Matthew 8:29 "And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?"

It defined for them the lowest hell, the deepest pit, the most terrible place of torture and eternal suffering.

Jesus, in spirit, entered that place when His body was in the grave and proclaimed triumph over the demons during the time between His death and resurrection.

“Chains of darkness ... Reserved unto judgment”:

Fallen angels are destined to be released from their present hell to be judged and then consigned to the lake of fire, the final hell, a place “prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matt. 25:41).

The judgment had been pronounced upon them.

It does not necessarily mean that it was carried out in its entirety at the time this is spoken.

I as a Christian am seated in heavenly places with Christ Jesus, but my body is still housing my spirit here on the earth.

2 Peter 2:5 "And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth [person], a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;"

“Spared not the old world”:

The second illustration serving as a precedent for God’s future judgment on false teachers is the judgment on the ancient world through the world-wide flood (Genesis chapters 6 – 8).

The human race was reduced to 8 people by that judgment (1 Peter 3:20).

“A preacher of righteousness”:

See Genesis 6:9; 7:1.

His life spoke of righteousness as he called people to repent and avoid the flood judgment.

Noah preached nearly 100 years and had no converts.

That should encourage some ministers today.

Noah, his wife, his 3 sons, and their wives were saved in the flood.

They were not saved from the flood.

It rained on them too.

They were saved in the flood.

These 8 people were to repopulate the world. "Eight" means new beginnings.

The rest of the evil world was destroyed by the flood.

The sin was so bad at the time, That God destroyed the world's people with the flood, it is said God was sorry He had ever made man.

Genesis 6:8 "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD."

Genesis 6:6 "And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart."

He destroyed them for the sin in their lives.

2 Peter 2:6 "And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned [them] with an overthrow, making [them] an example unto those that after should live ungodly;"

“Sodom and Gomorrha”:

The third precedent for a future divine judgment on the wicked is the total destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and the other lesser surrounding cities (Gen. 13; 18:16-33; 19:1-38; Deut. 29:23).

This judgment destroyed every person in the area by incineration.

“Making them an example”:

That is, a model, or a pattern.

God sent an unmistakable message to all future generations that wickedness results in judgment.

We see again from this, God will not always strive with man.

He is patient and kind and forgiving, but He will judge us when He says enough.

The judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah came because there were not even 10 righteous people within the city.

God rained down fire and brimstone on the city, because they were homosexuals and lesbians.

This is an abomination to God.

You remember, "abomination" means revolting sin.

We can look at the destruction of these cities and know what God will do to us, if our nation does not deal with this problem.

We must repent and turn to God, before He says enough.

Verses 7-8

“Delivered just Lot”:

Lot was righteous, as all the saved are, by faith in the true God.

Righteousness was imputed to him, by grace through faith, as it was to Abraham (Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:3, 11:22-23).

There was spiritual weakness in Lot (Gen. 19:6), e.g., immorality (Gen. 19:8), and drunkenness (Gen 19:33-35).

His heart was in Sodom (Gen 19:16), yet he did hate the sins of his culture and strongly sought ways to protect God’s angels from harm.

He obeyed the Lord in not looking back at Sodom (Gen. 19).

In both illustrations where God rendered a wholesale judgment of all living people (once on the whole earth, and once in the whole region of the plain South of the Dead Sea), Peter pointed out that God’s people were rescued (verse 5; verse 9).

The Greek word for “oppressed” implies that Lot was troubled deeply and tortured (the meaning of “tormented”), with the immoral, outrageous behavior of the people living in and around Sodom and Gomorrah.

Tragically, it is ordinary for believers today no longer to be shocked by the rampant sin that is in their society.

2 Peter 2:7 "And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked:"

Lot was justified in the sight of God, because he was the nephew of Abraham.

Abraham pled for the city.

God saved Lot, and his 2 daughters because of Abraham.

Lot's wife would have been saved, but she looked back at the city and turned to a pillar of salt.

These filthy people had even asked to have the 2 male angels so they could rape them.

These were evil people.

2 Peter 2:8 "(For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed [his] righteous soul from day to day with [their] unlawful deeds;)"

When God sends destruction on the ungodly, he commands deliverance for the righteous.

In bad company, we cannot but get either guilt or grief.

Let the sins of others be troubles to us.

Yet it is possible for the children of the Lord, living among the most profane, for them to retain their integrity.

There being more power in the grace of Christ, and his dwelling in them, than in the temptations of Satan, or the example of the wicked, with all their terrors or allurements.

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

“Deliver the godly out of temptations”:

The Greek word translated “temptations” implies an attack with intent to destroy, but from which God can deliver the godly before judgment falls on the wicked.

This kind of deliverance will occur prior to the Tribulation, when the Church will be kept “from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth” (Rev. 3:10).

There is no better example to prove this point, than the fact that God saved Noah in the midst of the flood.

Knoweth means continues to know.

This statement, then, is not just for their age, but ours, as well.

The blood of the Lord Jesus Christ protects us from the enemy, even today.

Jesus is the Judge of all the people of the world.

He will separate the good from the evil.

“To reserve the unjust”:

The wicked are kept like prisoners awaiting the sentencing that will send them to their eternal prison (verse 4).

The final judgment on the wicked is called the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-15), where all the ungodly of all the ages will be raised, judged finally, and cast into the lake of fire.

It is Jesus who will give the sentence of either heaven or hell.

When we are delivered from the temptation to sin, it is the name of Jesus that delivers us.

The best thing parents can do for their children are to pray the blood of Jesus will cover them and keep them from the temptations of this world.

Jesus is the Judge, but He is also the Deliverer.

Place your trust in Him and you will be protected from fleshly temptations.

Verses 10-17

False teachers are polemically described as “cursed children,” literally, “children of a curse”; “wells without water”, unable to satisfy the spiritual thirst of men; and “clouds” that are blown about by every wind of doctrine (see Jude 12).

2 Peter 2:10 "But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous [are they], self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities."

“Walk after the flesh” (Jude 6).

Like the wicked of Noah’s and Lot’s time, the false teachers of Peter’s era were slaves to the corrupt desires of the flesh.

This is speaking of the punishment coming on those who are controlled by their flesh and its lust.

We have discussed in these lessons before, that the person who is in authority (whether in government or in the church), are there because God placed them there for a purpose.

“Despise government”:

“Authority” comes from the same Greek word as “lord” (1:2).

The false teachers identified with Christ outwardly.

But they would not live under His lordship.

The two major characteristics of false teachers are emphasized in this verse:

1. Lust; and

2. Arrogance.

To speak evil of them would be questioning God's judgment in putting them there.

To speak evil of them would be to speak evil of the One who gave them their authority (God).

Presumptuous ... self-willed”:

Presumptuous meaning “Daring”, is to be brazen, audacious and defiant.

“Self-willed is to be obstinate, determined in one’s own way.

“Speak evil of dignities”:

To revile or speak evil is to ridicule and blaspheme.

Angelic majesties were probably wicked angels.

Wicked angels have a level of existence in the supernatural world that has a dignity and a transcendent quality about it that is beyond humanity (Eph. 6:12).

A certain honor belongs to those who transcend time.

Consequently, there must be no flippancy regarding Satan and his angels.

It may even be that these teachers tried to excuse their wicked lusts by pointing to the angels (in Genesis 6), “who did not keep their own domain” (Jude 6).

The blasphemy of even bad angels by the false teachers demonstrated their arrogance and antipathy toward any authority, be it good or bad.

2 Peter 2:11 "Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord."

“Angels which are greater in power and might”:

A reference to the holy angels, who are greater in power than human beings.

“Bring not railing accusation”:

Unlike false teachers who are defiant toward higher powers, the holy angels so revere their Lord that they will not speak insults against any authority.

Even the archangel, Michael, recognizing the great presence and power of Satan, refused to speak evil of him, but called on the Lord to do so (Jude 9; see below).

No believer should be so boldly foolish as to mock or command the power of supernatural demons, especially Satan.

When Jesus took on the form of flesh, He was spoken of as being a little lower than the angels.

This is speaking of flesh being lower than the spirit.

"Angels":

These are ministering spirits.

They are not controlled by the limitations of the flesh.

Angels are not accusers.

They are ministering spirits to help the believers.

They have a specific job, as you will see in the next Scripture.

Hebrews 1:14 "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"

Notice in the following Scripture, that the angel did not rebuke the devil.

The Lord rebuked the devil.

Jude 1:9 "Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee."

This is the same method Christians must use, as well.

The name of Jesus rebukes the evil one.

We have no power in our own name.

It is the power in His name that succeeds.

2 Peter 2:12 "But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption;"

"As natural brute beasts":

See Jude 10.

The false teachers have no sensitivity to the power and presence of demons or holy angels, but like wild animals, insubordinate, insolent, and arrogant, they charge into the supernatural realm, cursing away at persons and matters they don't understand.

“And destroyed”:

Since they live like beasts that are “born ... to be captured and killed,” the false teachers will be killed like beasts.

False teachers cannot get beyond their own instincts and thus will be destroyed by the folly of those passions.

We must leave the judgment to Jesus.

Judge not, that you be not judged.

We, many times, do not have all the facts in, before we begin to judge.

Notice, the word “natural”, which is speaking of a man who is operating in the flesh.

He is not a spirit man.

The flesh must die that the spirit might live.

Look at the following Scripture with me.

Galatians 6:8 "For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

It is a dangerous thing to judge others.

With the same judgment we judge, we shall be judged.

2 Peter Chapter 2 Questions

1. What will be the condition of the teachers spoken of in verse 1?
2. What is the false message that they bring?
3. What will happen to these evil people?
4. What will these false prophets and false teachers do that will cause many to believe them?
5. How is the only way not to be deceived?

6. What does "pernicious", in verse 2, mean?
7. In verse 3, what does "feigned" mean?
8. What does "covet" mean?
9. What happened to the angels who fell?
10. What does the author believe about the fallen angels who followed Lucifer, instead of God?
11. What do the "chains" in verse 4 indicate?
12. What is Noah called in verse 5?
13. Noah found _____ in the eyes of the LORD.
14. Who did God bring the flood upon?
15. What does the number "eight" mean?
16. Where do we find the Scripture that says the LORD repented that He made man?
17. What place was so bad that God destroyed it with fire and brimstone?
18. Why did the judgment come on these people?
19. What does "abomination" mean?
20. Who was delivered from the destruction of this evil place?
21. What had vexed Lot daily?
22. What happened to the husbands of Lot's 2 daughters?
23. God saved Noah in the midst of the _____.
24. What protects the Christian from the enemy today?
25. What is the best thing parents can do for their children today?
26. Jesus is the Judge, He is also the _____.
27. Who puts people in places of authority, really?
28. When you speak evil of those in authority, what are you really doing?
29. What is meant by being a little lower than the angels?
30. What are "angels"?

- 31. What is the specific job of the angels?
- 32. Which of the archangels is spoken of in Jude chapter 1 verse 9?"
- 33. How can a Christian come against the devil?
- 34. Judge _____, that ye be not judged.