

False Teachers

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[0 : 00] Because we're looking at 2 Peter 2, verses 1-9. Now, you know, last week we kind of ended with the certainty that the Scripture, that it reminded us of the oneness of the Bible.

And we knew the certainty of the Scripture as you heard. In 1 Peter, verses 20-21, Pastor John left us with, But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation.

For no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will. But men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

Old Testament prophecy of Scripture was written by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God. And the prophets were instruments in using the right of this.

And so we're going to let us all always remember that God loves the world. And He's determined to rescue it through Jesus Christ. This means God's love will confront and deal with sin and with injustice.

[1 : 08] All through the Old Testament, false prophecy is spoken about. And I haven't run across this in some of my reading the other day in Deuteronomy. I never thought about this. But it says, If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign of wonder, and the sign of wonder comes true concerning what He's spoken to you, saying, Let us go after other gods whom you have not known.

Let us serve them. You shall not listen to the words of that prophet or the dreamer of dreams. For the Lord your God is testing you to find out if you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

And you shall follow the Lord your God and fear Him. And you shall keep His commandments. Listen to His voice. Serve Him and cling to Him. You know, that's what we want to do. And even Jesus often warned, and like in Matthew chapter 24, and then repeated again in Mark 13, 22, He said, For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect.

And we are the elect. And as we look at 2 Peter chapter 2 verses 1 through 9 this week, we will see the dangers of false teachers. And in the latter part of the Scripture, we'll see the destruction of false teachers.

These false teachings are not about the debatable doctrines that we might have in the church sometimes. You know, like maybe certain signs of gifts or women in ministry or how we might interpret a passage.

[2 : 47] No, these teachers are introducing doctrinal heresies even to the point of denying Christ's return and inspiring immoral behavior.

And these teachers are intentional. They're not confused. Today, these false teachers may be introducing all kinds of immoral issues. They may be trying to help us or try to get us to normalize illicit sex activities or adultery or premarital sex or even homosexuality.

What Peter is speaking of is to trust in God who will rescue the righteous and punish the wicked. Not to think that we are being called to reform all of society.

We have to be careful for these false teachers create a fear that makes us think everything is falling apart and that all righteousness is being swept away.

But Peter is saying, be assured God is in control. The ancient judgment has not been forgotten. So let's look at our scriptures. We start out in chapter 2 and we're going to read verses 1 through 3.

[3 : 56] These are the dangers of false teachers. Peter's pointing out in the Old Testament. Oh, let me read my scripture first. But false prophets also arose among the people.

Now when he's saying the people, he's talking about the Jews. Just as they will also be false teachers among you, you will secretly, they will secretly, who will introduce, I'm sorry, among you, who will secretly introduce destruction heresies, even denying the master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.

Many will follow their sensuality. And because of them, the way of truth will be maligned. And in their greed, they will exploit you with false words.

Their judgment from long ago is not idle. And their destruction is not asleep. See, Peter's pointing out that in the Old Testament, false prophets arose among God's people, the Jews.

And that false teachers will arise in the church. This is a prophecy that Peter's telling us about, things that are going to happen. But he heard these words from Jesus himself.

[5 : 07] These false teachers will deny the idea of a final reckoning, when God will hold all people accountable of their choices. Their denial of judgment allowed them to ignore Jesus' teachings about money and about sex.

They will sleep around, they'll profit by teaching in the churches. Again, Jesus told the disciples that false teachers would come. In Matthew 24, 11, he said, Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many.

So Peter heard these words from Jesus, and now he's experiencing it. For now false teachers were rising within the church, twisting Jesus' teaching and the words of the apostles.

They were crafty too. They were not openly teaching these false ideas, but they were covertly introducing them into the church. Jesus said, Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.

They are motivated by greed, abuse of power, and selfish desires. These false teachers even go so far as to belittle, to deny the significance of Jesus' life, His death, and His resurrection.

[6 : 23] And these false teachers will continue, even to our present day, and in the future. These false teachers will encourage immoral acts, especially those of the sexual nature.

This is a reminder to us today that we need to evaluate all the teachings according to God's Word. His Scripture, as we were reminded in last week. And if we do not know His Word, then how can we evaluate what we see and what we hear?

Even today, there's a vast amount of teaching throughout social media, books, and music that needs to be evaluated according to God's Word before we expose our hearts to these teachings.

So we need to remember that. And just as then, today, these false teachings distort the truth sometimes for financial gain. Saying what people want to hear to encourage people to financially support them whether they're doing it intentionally or unintentionally to support them.

The teaching and the actions of false teachers then, as now, hurt the message of Jesus Christ. How many times have we seen that in the news when someone has led and made the name of Christ look bad in the church by what they've done?

[7 : 43] Sadly, many will follow these behaviors of false teachers as even spoken about in the church to Thyatira in Revelation 2, verse 20.

It says, I have this against you that you tolerate the woman Jezebel who calls herself a prophetess. She teaches and leads my bondservants astray so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.

So are these false teachers to say? I don't believe so. for what they are doing is not simple doctrine differences. They might take and use something like from 1 John 2, verse 2, where it says, and He Himself is the propitiation of sin, of our sin, and not for ours only, but for those of the whole world.

See, they might take something like that and say, well, forgiveness is for the whole world. But the truth is, forgiveness is for one who accepts Jesus Christ as their Lord. It is not a get-out-of-jail card.

And we need to be careful of that, that we think that. Now, the last part of my scripture that I was given is about the destruction of the false teachers. It says in chapter, in verse 4, it says, For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and commit them to the pits of darkness, reserved for judgment, and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah a preacher of righteousness with seven others, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly.

[9 : 20] And if he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes, having made an example of those who have lived ungodly lives thereafter, and if he rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men, for by what he saw and heard, that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteousness and his soul

tormented day after day by these lawless deeds.

Then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation and to keep the unrighteous under the punishment for the day of judgment, and especially those who indulge the flesh in a corrupt desire and despise authority.

Now we're going to look at the destruction of the false teachers. And just as a little bit of information, that sentence we just read there, it's one of the longest sentences in the New Testament.

So it took a little bit for me to try to not keep putting punctuation in there. Peter now recalls three ancient examples. When God brings justice against rebellion, these examples demonstrate that God knows how to punish the wicked and protect the righteous.

First, God did not spare the angels in their rebellion in verse 4. They were cast into hell. And the word, the hell that's mentioned in here was from a Greek word that's called Tartarus.

[10:48] I believe I'm pronouncing it right. And only occurs in this one spot in the New Testament. Tartarus was lower than Hades. It was the place of divine punishment. It was the most, if you were going to be punished, it was the most punishable place.

In the Hebrews, they would use a word that would translate kind of like whale, the darkest, innermost place. And so, Jesus also shared that God's swift judgment to the wicked would be to the wicked and rescue the righteous when He spoke in Luke chapter 17 verses 26-29.

Jesus said, And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it will also happen in the days of the Son of Man. They were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage until the day that Noah entered the ark and the flood came and destroyed them all.

And it was the same as it happened in the day of Lot that they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, and they were planting, and they were building. But on that, on the day that Lot went out of Sodom, it was rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed it all.

So second, we see that the great flood upon the earth was wicked, but God rescued Noah and his family. Then we see that God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah and He rescued Lot and his family.

[12:12] Now we are reminded there is a time of judgment. But we can see that God withholds His punishment often for a long time. He's patient, patiently waiting for others to turn back.

You know, when I think about that, I always think about how Jonah went to Nineveh and how, you know, he was wanting to be destroyed. And God, when He went through it, the people repented and God didn't destroy him.

And so, we also, so we are reminded that there is a time of judgment. But we can see God withhold this judgment for a long time. And He is going to be patient about it. God leaves us with His words that He knows how to rescue the godly.

And we need to remember that. He will punish the unrighteous. And on that final day of judgment, they will receive the reward. And we need to remember that He's in control.

So, as we finish up there, I want to remind you just a few things. First, be aware of false teachers, even those who may be in the church body. Just because somebody is in the church body, just because somebody holds the Bible in their hand, does not mean they're teaching the truth.

[13:24] You have to be careful of that. Second, be compassionate. Compassionately instruct those who are misled by false teachers. Sometimes, especially sometimes with young people, I've found that they'll pick up something on the internet or something.

And you have to be there to compassionately help them with that and help them point it out, you know, what's correct in the Scripture. And finally, remember, seek understanding. We talked about this a little bit last week.

Seek understanding and knowledge of God's Word through reading it, through studying it, through meditating on it, and putting it into action in your lives so you will not be led astray.

We've heard in the Scripture that even the elect would be led astray. So we have to be careful of that. And how can you know what the words of God are if you never read them? How can you know the words of God if you always let somebody else tell you what God's trying to say?

You need to pick up His Word. You need to read His Word. You need to study His Word. And do get help, you know, listening to good teachers and even, you know, through books and stuff like that.

[14:31] But you need to think about what you're reading and everything. I'm going to leave you with one last Scripture and then I'm done. This last Scripture is coming out of Colossians 2, verse 8.

It says, See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception. According to the traditions of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather according to Christ.

So I'll leave you with that. You put yourself, your faith in Christ, knowing God is in control of all this. You study His Word and God will stay true to it.

Let's bow our heads for a word of prayer. Heavenly Father, we come to You this morning. We thank You, Lord, for Your Word, for Your love, for Your mercy, Your grace.

We thank You, I thank You, Lord, for Your patience. Lord, You have been patient with me and You're patient with Your people. And Lord, we know that You have blessed us with the miracle of Your Word in the Bible.

[15 : 31] Lord, Your Scripture gives us through every day. It gives us truth. So Father, let us each think about this in our lives. And Father, if there is one that is here this morning that has not come to know You yet, or maybe has tried to make that decision, I pray, Lord, that they don't leave without talking to one of the pastors or one of the other people in the church and make themselves right with You, Lord.

Lord, we always depend on You. We thank You for Your love. We thank You for Your mercy. In Jesus' name, Amen. If we have been rescued by our Lord, then He calls upon us to join Him in the business of rescuing others.

Looking ahead to chapter 3, verse 9.