

2 Peter 2:1-10a \ The Lord Knows \ 7-31-22

Peter draws the first chapter of this letter to a close explaining *with some force* that Scripture is indeed breathed out by God and produced not by the will of any of its writers, but inspired by the Holy Spirit who “*carried along*” the men who wrote it down.

- ***These are not the mere words of men, these are the words of God.***

Peter grounds the validity and truthfulness of Scripture on what happened on the Mount of Transfiguration.

- When Moses saw just a part of God’s glory in Ex. 33 & 34, the people saw God’s glory reflected in his face.
- But when Peter, James, & John saw Jesus transfigured, they saw God’s glory bursting from within Him.

What they saw on that mountain was just a partial glimpse of what Christ would be like when He comes again.

- ***What they heard and saw on that mountain confirmed what the prophets had been saying all throughout the OT.***

It was like a “*lamp shining in a dark place*” that Peter says we would “*do well to pay attention to*”. [1:19]

Finally, the end of chapter one confirms that no prophecy – no truth of Scripture – ever came from somebody’s personal opinion.

[1:21] says that the words of Scripture were given **by God** to carry His ideas *to mankind*, and this is why we can’t try to fill the words of Scripture with *our own ideas*.

We have to have a biblical and eternal lens through which we read, interpret, and apply Scripture.

- If we don’t, we’ll try to filter it through our own narrow, flawed, & temporary lens.

➔ Now, I’ve taken us through such a thorough review this morning because chapter 2 begins with the same topic – **the truthfulness of Scripture**.

And almost the whole second chapter hits us with just punch after punch of how people mishandle, twist, and undervalue what God says.

Peter’s been wanting his readers to understand that it’s from God and not from man.

And he goes back to the fact that these are not just cleverly designed myths because they were *eyewitnesses* to the glory of God in Jesus.

- So the prophets who pointed forward to Christ were right.
- And the authors are *carried along by the Spirit* and aren't just trying to pass their opinions off as God's Word.

In contrast, there are some who secretly bring in destructive heresies.

Let's read 2 Peter 2:1-10a and hear what Peter says the Lord does about it.

Before we get too far into, let me just remind us that **this matters – truth matter.**

- Regardless of if you've been saved recently or 50 years ago – truth matters.
 - Theology matters. Doctrine matters.
 - ***By "doctrine" I mean the core truths/teaching from Scripture about God, Jesus, mankind, & salvation.***

But it seems that we're hearing the opposite from almost every group of people who claim to Christian and love/follow God.

- **A popular notion is that doctrine creates too many arguments, so Christians should simply focus on loving people.**

Please don't hear me wrong – ***Christians are absolutely called to love others.***

- They're called to love people in ways that isn't possible without the Spirit – *love your enemies??*
 - Jesus illustrated this over and over in His parables & by His example.

Peter ends his list of Christlike attributes with love in 1:7.

- **Paul** argues in 1 Cor. 13 that you can do a lot of Christian-like stuff, but if you don't have love, you've gained *nothing* – you *are* nothing.

Christians are called to **love** people, but not by compromising truth.

A similarly misguided notion I've heard is that since doctrine creates too many arguments, Christians should simply focus on *maintaining unity*.

Again – ***Christians are absolutely called to live in unity with one another.***

In Ephesians 4 he's talking about unity in the body and lays out a really helpful precedent:

- [v.15] *"speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ"*
- [v.25] *"Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another."*

Christians are called to **unity** in the body, but not by compromising truth.

In fact, I'd go so far as to say that we aren't truly loving our neighbors if we refuse to speak the truth to them.

- And we can't have biblical unity in the church if we avoid discussing sound doctrine.

Christian – don't let anyone convince you to trade sound doctrine for the sake of love or unity.

- *They aren't mutually exclusive* – you can't only have one if you forsake the other.
- **Without the truth of Scripture, love and unity are hollow goals that do not accomplish what God intends.**

Don't fall for the lie that doctrine divides a church.

- It doesn't – in fact, it does the opposite.
 - **Sound doctrine unites the church under the authority of God.**

A church that stands together on sound doctrine will do more for the kingdom of God than a church that stands on being relevant to the culture.

Doctrinally sound teaching from God's Word free from heavy personal opinion is what you and I need week in and week out.

- We need it preached and taught to us regularly in order to understand how we're supposed to relate to God and to other people.

I'm hitting you with this so much today because Peter spends a whole chapter hitting us with it first.

➔ He says in [v.1] that **this is nothing new.**

False prophets arose amongst the people of Israel *before* Peter's time and false teachers will rise up among his readers & in the future, too.

- They will *"secretly bring in destructive heresies"*.

If you think about all the threats to the people of God in the OT, the most destructive of them weren't coming from the Philistines or the Assyrians or another people group;

- ***The biggest threat to the people of God were the false prophets within their gates.***

➔ **Read Jeremiah and you'll see what I'm talking about.**

Day after day Jeremiah relayed the words of God to the people, but they wouldn't listen.

**** KIDS** – it's like what Jesus said in the parable of the soils, *"He who has ears, let him hear"*.

The people of Israel had their ears, but they were *hearers* of the Word only, not *doers*.

- And with this being the case, they deceived themselves.
- They didn't really listen to Jeremiah or to God.
- They listened to who they wanted to listen to – prophets who would comfort them with lies, not the truth.

Jeremiah 23:16-17, *"Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you, filling you with vain hopes. They speak visions of their own minds, not from the mouth of the LORD. They say continually to those who despise the word of the LORD, 'It shall be well with you'; and to everyone who stubbornly follows his own heart, they say, 'No disaster shall come upon you.'"*

Herein lies the danger with listening to the voice of man instead of God: **we can be easily comforted into laziness when we need to be truly stirred up to change.**

→ **Complacency is easier than repentance.**

- But one is the evidence of a person still separated from God and one is the evidence of a person who's been changed by God.

There have been plenty of books written about how to grow the church.

- They'll say you need lots of things that appeal to our comforts.
- And even though not all of them are bad or wrong, **our flesh desires easy comfort instead of hard truths.**

But the Word of God never comforts the sinner – it reveals their true condition before God.

- The comfort comes when we read how our condition before God can be changed by the atoning death and constant intercession of Jesus.

Paul tells Timothy that the Israelites had another kind of problem with their ears, the same problem that people still have today – they have *"itching ears"*.

- This means that they don't want to hear truth from God, they want to hear the things that will make them happy, even if they are lies.
 - They want people to tell them things that tickle their ears, not God's truth.

Paul urges the young pastor Timothy to preach the Word all the time, to be ready to *reprove, rebuke, and exhort* with patience – WHY?

- [2 Tim. 4:3-4] – *“For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.”*

Jeremiah was preaching what God told him to preach, but false prophets came behind him telling the people not to worry about what he was saying.

- They reassured people who despise the Word and people who stubbornly follow their own heart that *“everything was going to be okay”* when it wasn’t.
 - That was not God’s message, that was man’s message that tickled the ears.
 - *And people willingly grabbed hold of the easy and ignored the hard.*

Peter calls these false teachings *“heresies”*, even ***“destructive heresies”***.

- **What does a heresy destroy? → *the truth of God***

[v.1] tells us this happens among God’s people even still, and when it does, it’s incredibly destructive to the life of the Christian.

And who brings these heresies among God’s people? → *“false teachers”* who *“deny the Master who bought them”*.

I think Peter’s talking about people who claim to be Christians, but deny the act of the atonement itself.

- They say they speak on behalf of the God they know, but everything about them denies it.

If they had truly been purchased by the sacrificial death of Christ, they wouldn’t be lost.

- They couldn’t and wouldn’t deny who Christ is and what He’s done because God’s people persevere.

These prophets, these people, might **say** that God is their Master, but they deny Him by their actions, words, and lifestyle.

- When speaking of deceptive people, **1 John 2:19** says, *“They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.”*

And what happens to the person who denies the atoning sacrifice of Christ? → destruction

Whether in this life or the next, destruction comes even while they preach peace & safety.

- They *“bring [destruction] upon themselves”*, Peter says.

→ This truth is illustrated in every sin you can think of.

Sin brings down discipline, and if discipline is not heeded, sin results in destruction.

- This applies to the “little” sin of lying just like it applies to the “bigger” sin of stealing.
- Without repentance, correction, & change destruction will come.
 - Sin has consequences.

→ And what does [v.2] remind us of? → sin affects more than just the person who sins

The lies / heresies these false teachers were spinning found an audience.

- *“many will follow their sensuality”*

Jesus said this in Matthew 24:11 – *“Many false prophets will arise and lead many astray”*.

You’ve seen people and pastors claim the name of Christ, even preach some truths from Scripture, but live for their own lusts and seem to be doing okay.

- So OK that it makes others say, *“Man, if this guy has it good living this way, I can too”*.
- And many are led astray.

“Because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed”, [v.2] says.

Christ – His Gospel – men & women who truly follow Him – the ***way of truth*** will be spoken evil of, defamed, ridiculed.

- **READ 1 Peter 4:12-16**

[v.3] tells us that these false teachers are ***greedy*** and won’t hesitate to ***exploit*** people.

- **Is any of this sounding familiar to what we see in our culture today?**

Peter says that *God may tolerate it for a season, but not forever.*

→ In order to illustrate the judgment of God against this kind of sin, Peter gives three OT examples in [v.4-10a].

1. Fallen angels [v.4]
2. Ungodly ancient world [v.5]
3. Sodom & Gomorrah [v.6]

In [v.4] Peter has in mind **the fall of the angels** when Lucifer and his followers rebelled against God.

- They were cast out of heaven and God gave them the dwelling of hell as penalty.
- God ***did not spare them but cast them into hell.***
- God ***committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment.***

These angels have a reserved seat for the final judgment and will have to face that judgment without Christ as their Mediator.

You have that Mediator in Christ when you believe and put your faith in Him alone.

- At the judgment, those with Christ have a Mediator, but the angels do not.
 - They are being kept until the just judgment of a just God.

In [v.5] Peter mentions **the “ancient world”** and connects it to Noah.

- God did not spare the world, only Noah, his wife, 3 sons and their wives – 8 people.

The state of mankind prior to the flood was recorded in Genesis 6:5: *“The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”*

- This is a heartbreaking announcement of the state of the world.

Despite the preaching of Noah – a *“herald of righteousness”* – mankind would not listen.

Violence, evil, & moral relativism dominated the thoughts & hearts of humanity.

- Everyone did what was right in their own eyes; they didn’t care what God or Noah said.
 - And so God started over with 8 people.

In Matthew 24:37 Jesus says that the earth will be in the same state when He returns, as it was *“in the days of Noah”*.

- The flood was not some accident of nature – it was the clear judgment of God.

In [v.6-8] Peter mentions **the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah**, and Abraham’s nephew Lot who lived there with his family.

Years prior, Abraham and Lot parted ways and Lot picked the lush and fertile ground of Sodom to dwell in.

- It might have been a good place to raise sheep, but it wasn’t a good place to raise a family.

And if you know much about Lot and his time in Sodom, it may seem a bit unusual that Peter describes him as *“righteous”*.

- Lot does some *really* questionable things, but Peter reveals what I think is the reason why he describes him as righteous – because he was “greatly distressed” and “tormented” by what was going on around him.

I don't think that Lot viewed himself as righteous, or that he was superior than the people who lived in the city with him.

- But as he watched and listened to what the people said and did around him “*day after day*”, his soul was tormented and his heart was broken.

It's true that he tried to fix a problem in a really, really unwise way, but the motivation for his intervention seems to be right.

- ➔ And God used Sodom and Gomorrah as “*an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly*”.

Peter uses these examples from the ancient world (OT) to illustrate the danger of false teachers and the effect they have on the people and the culture.

When truth is blurred, society suffers.

- R.C. Sproul simply says, “***False doctrine produces ungodly living***”.

Peter is reminding Christians of actual judgment – of angels, of the whole world, and of wicked cities/societies.

After all of this, Peter wants us to know 2 things that he summarizes in [v.9-10a]:

1. If God did not spare the people in these examples, He won't stand for the spreading of lies from false teachers either.

God knows what to do with the unrighteous.

- His justice will always pierce the thick cloak of wickedness and rebellion.

God knows what to do with those who “*indulge in the lust of defiling passion and despise authority*”.

- This is referencing those who practice sexual immorality of any variety and those who refuse to submit to authority, be it their parents, bosses, government, etc.

God's judgment is sure, and Jesus says in John 3:36 that “*the wrath of God remains on*” the person who does not believe or obey Jesus, the Son.

2. Though judgment fell on the people in these examples, **God surely knows how to rescue the godly**.

Noah and Lot's whole worlds were pressing ungodliness onto them, and it grieved them, but God *rescued them from their trials*.

And Christian, be assured that God knows how to rescue you, too.

God knows what to do and how to rescue.

- And **God has sent His Rescuer, Jesus Christ, to seek and to save the lost.**

You are being sought after by a loving and just God, the One who knows how to execute perfect justice and how to provide perfect deliverance.

Don't fall for the lies of those who would comfort you and tell you everything is alright when you need to be stirred up to repent.

- Repent and believe the Gospel.