

# Grow in the Grace and Knowledge of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ

## An Expository Journey Through **2Peter** 8- The Lord Knows How to Rescue the Godly from Temptation and to Keep the Unrighteous Under Punishment for the Day of Judgement

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### **2Peter 2:1-11**

**1** But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.

**2** Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned;

**3** 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.

**4** For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment;

**5** 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;

**6** and *if* He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing *them* to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly *lives* thereafter;

**7** and *if* He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men

**8** (for by what he saw and heard *that* righteous man, while living among them, felt *his* righteous soul tormented day after day by *their* lawless deeds),

**9** *then* the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep

the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment,

**10** and especially those who indulge the flesh in *its* corrupt desires and despise authority. Daring, self-willed, they do not tremble when they revile angelic majesties,

**11** whereas angels who are greater in might and power do not bring a reviling judgment against them before the Lord.

To the Glory of God

Now under the Old Covenant- people, who said that God had spoken to them, when He hadn't, were called, "*False Prophets*". So, back then there were *true* and *false* Prophets. Those, who legitimately spoke on God's behalf were *true* Prophets; or just Prophets; while those who had no Divine Authority were called, *false* Prophets. And so, under the *inferior* Covenant identified by the sacrifice of bulls and goats- the emphasis was on "Prophecy". And "*Thus says the Lord!*" was a common theme running throughout the time before Jesus.

But after Messiah had come and had brought in an *infinitely* superior Covenant; based on *infinitely* superior Promises; brought about by an *infinitely* superior Sacrifice; offered by an *infinitely* superior High Priest- the emphasis shifted to "Teaching" and what was being taught by those Teachers. You see, the Revelation of God to Man is *progressive*- in that, over time, it becomes more and more *clear*, and more and more *precise*. And so, now we have true and false *Teachers*.

Now because it is true that we are saved by what we *believe in*; and by what we *trust in*; and what we *confess*- and NOT by what we *do*- what we believe in- *matters*. And so, what is being taught- *matters* as well. And the Apostle Peter was aware of this shift away from Prophets and onto Teaching. And we know that by what he says here at the very beginning of Chapter 2:

**But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you...**

First, the old fisherman says that "**false Prophets arose among the people.**" And he is referring to the time when the First or the Old Covenant was in force. And so, the "**people**" Peter refers to here- are the people of

God under the Original Covenant- or the Jews. But then look at how he shifts away from Prophets and on to Teachers in the next section:

**... just as there will also be false teachers among you...**

So, Peter tells us here that to the extent that there were false *Prophets* among the Jews of the Old Covenant- there WILL be false *Teachers* who will rise up in the Church under the New. And then Peter says that these false Teachers will do two things:

- **Who will secretly introduce destructive heresies**
- **Deny[ing] the Master who bought them**

Notice that Peter says they will SECRETLY introduce destructive heresies. So, these false Teachers will go behind the back of the Leaders of the Church and will *introduce*; or they will bring into the Church- Heresies or false Teachings that are destructive. So, these false Teachers do NOT want their Teachings to be brought under the Light of Divine Truth- where they can be analyzed and examined to determine if they are in accord with sacred Scripture. Neither do these false Teachers wish to be held accountable themselves. So, they bring in their lies and falsehoods “secretly” or “privily” or “under the radar”.

Now the word that was translated into English here as “**destructive**” (*apooleia*; Strongs #684) has to do with: *the loss of eternal life; Teaching that brings in eternal misery; or perdition; or Teaching that is damnable*. So, this is *not* harmless Teaching; or someone simply having a different opinion; or looking at something in a different way. No, this has to do with Teachings *that are able to damn the soul- forever!*

Yet God will not allow them to get away with this terrible Sin. And so, the result of these false Teachers doing these two wicked things will be that they will:

**... bring[ing] swift destruction upon themselves.**

Again, the word used here is the very *same* word that Peter just used to describe *the loss of eternal life*. So, not only do the Leaders of the Church move to get rid of the Teacher and his false Teachings- but God sovereignly judges this man. And this goes back to what Jude taught about false Teachers in **Jude 4**:

**For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.**

Here, Jude teaches almost identical to Peter. Peter says that these false Teachers will secretly introduce destructive heresies; while Jude says they have crept in unnoticed. But look closely to what Jude teaches about these false Teachers:

**... those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.**

Here, Jude assigns four different characteristics of all false Teachers- all of them bad:

- They are “**long beforehand marked out for this Condemnation**”
- They are “**ungodly persons**”
- They “**turn the Grace of God into licentiousness**”
- They “**deny the only Master and Lord- Jesus Christ**”

... so, let's look closely at each one.

## **1. False Teachers are Predestined for Damnation**

### **Jude 4a**

**For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation...**

Now we must understand, dear friends, that there is a difference between somebody *believing* and *teaching* something that is false- and a Heretic. Let me explain. There are probably very few people in this Sanctuary this morning that have *always* believed rightly and fully about every single Issue in the Bible. And that means that you were *wrong* about some things. But, in addition to *believing* wrongly about certain things- most of you have also told others about what you believed. And that “telling to others” is called, “Teaching”. So, *most* people, who are alive today; and

who are genuinely saved- have *believed* wrongly and they have also *taught* wrongly about several things pertaining to God.

We have to realize that most people do not come to Jesus for Salvation as a clean slate. They are a product of how they were raised; and what they have *already* been taught. But as they begin to read and study the Bible ; and as they grow in Grace and in Knowledge- they come to *reject* certain things they grew up with; while they *adopt* other things that the Bible genuinely teaches.

So, yes, they have been wrong. They have *believed* wrongly; and they have *taught* wrongly. But they did this in Ignorance. And, at the time- they truly thought they were telling the Truth. They *honestly* thought that is what the Bible said. But they were wrong. But they didn't *know* they were wrong- until they grew in the Grace and the Knowledge and Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ (2Peter 3:18). So, as they grew in both God's Grace and in the Knowledge of the Truth- it became apparent that they were in error about certain things. And they repented and began believing and teaching correctly- or at least, *more* correctly.

So, even though they were wrong about some things- two things were always true:

- They were NEVER wrong about Essential Truth
- They were *honestly* wrong about second and third tier Issues

“Essential Truth” consists of what a person MUST believe in order to be saved. People, who either don't know; or who don't believe Essential Truth- are NOT saved. And so, a genuinely saved person, who is simply wrong about other things- MUST NEVER be wrong about Essential Truth- or else he IS a Heretic.

Secondly, even though they are wrong about other things- they were wrong- *honestly*. They didn't *know* they were wrong; and they weren't *trying* to be wrong. They were *trying* to be right- and they simply failed. Now that *doesn't* make it okay- but it *does* explain it.

So, I don't think this is odd at all. I think this is perfectly normal. Because I have never met the first person who had all Knowledge about the things of God from “jump street.” The Bible says that *everyone* who is truly saved- *grows* in both the Grace and Knowledge of God. And, by definition, if you “grow in the Knowledge of God”- you gain Knowledge in areas in which you were, at one time ignorant. And *that* normal growth in God is

what corrects most of our wrong Beliefs and Teachings.

But that is *much different* than the false Teaching or a Heretic. A real Heretic is NOT confused or ignorant about what he teaches. No, a Heretic *purposefully* teaches in order to deceive. So, they know full-well that what they teach is unbiblical- but they don't care. Their desire is to deceive as many people as possible. So, according to what Jude says, a genuine Heretic has been "ordained" or "set apart" or "chosen" or "marked out" by God for Condemnation or Damnation. So, *real* "false Teachers" CANNOT be saved. Jude says here that all false Teachers were "**long beforehand marked out for this Condemnation**". Now the English phrase, "**marked out**" comes from a word (*prografoo*; Strongs# 4270) that has to do with: *being written before time*. So, from before time- God chose these men to do what was *always* in their hearts to do- deceive people.

Now God didn't *make* or *force* them do this. But He sovereignly and passively *allowed* these people to fill the place of being a Heretic and a false Teacher- to secretly teach damnable heresies; to trouble people's souls; and to seek to destroy the Church.

Now why in the world would a Good and Sovereign God allow Heretics to do this? So, that an even *greater* Good would come forth- that would NOT have come forth- had God not allowed the Evil.

So, what might that greater Good be? Well, there are probably several- on both a personal and corporate level. But, according to History- every time a major false Teacher rose up to bring in a serious Heresy to the Church- the Church became stronger; more- godly; and more biblical than it was *before* the Heresy. You see, the process that the Church goes through to understand the Heresy; and then to denounce and reject it- *based solely on Scripture*- is very helpful to both individuals and the entire Body as a whole.

So, God uses periodic attacks against His Church to *solidify* and *strengthen* His people. Let me repeat that. The only reason that false Teachers are alive- is to be used by satan to *strengthen* the Church. Strengthen the Church? Yes. How? Because every single attack against the Purity of the Gospel ALWAYS results in several things happening in response to the attack:

- People are awakened to the Danger of False Teaching
- God raises up someone (or a group) who engages and defeats the false Teaching with Scripture

- The Issue under assault become highlighted and thus becomes more and more clear and precise
- Efforts are made which prevents (or hinders) a future attack against that particular Issue

So, God uses the Evil of Heretics and Heresies to *purify* His Church. But the Heretics *themselves* are, in every way of looking at it- *unsavable*. They will NOT be granted the gift of Repentance; they will NEVER recant; and they will NEVER admit they were wrong. Again, look at how Jude infallibly describes them:

### **Jude 12&13**

**12** These are the men who are hidden reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted;  
**13** wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam; wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever.

... and that last phrase,

**... for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever**

... illustrates the frightening Reality that genuine Heretics are *predestined* for Damnation.

## **2. Genuine Heretics are Ungodly Persons**

Real Heretics are not godly people. The Bible says they are ungodly- or unlike God. Now this doesn't mean that all Heretics are mass-murderers or pedophiles. Some historical Heretics, like Joseph Smith (Mormons) had a "humanly engineered Morality" that was head and shoulders ABOVE that of the average Church member of his day. And satan used that supposed Morality as a tool- to further deceive people. Other historical Heretics, like Muhammad (Islam), were, in fact, hypocrites of the highest order- enforcing one Standard of behavior on his followers- while excusing himself from that same behavior.

But history reveals that the overwhelming majority of all serious,

historical Heretics were ungodly in their behavior- with egregious acts of sexual immorality and financial impropriety abounding.

### **3. Genuine Heretics Turn the Grace of God into Licentiousness**

Now the word, “*Licentiousness*” means: *lacking legal or moral restraints; revelers; marked by a disregard for strict rules of correctness.* So, heretics attack the Grace of God in one of two ways:

- They *ignore* Grace (Legalism)
- They *abuse* Grace (Antinomianism)

The Grace of God has *always* been a particular problem for Heretics- and they never seem to tire of attacking this precious Gift. False Teachings abound where Grace is either *ignored* or *marginalized* to the point of being completely ineffectual; or where it is *abused* and *overrun* to the degree that it gives deceived souls- the license to sin with impunity. So, by definition- false Teachers never correctly understand Grace.

For example, Ellen G. White (7<sup>th</sup> Day Adventism) verbally affirmed the Grace of God. Yet, as you get further and further into her false Teaching- Grace is never enough. So, even if a person has trusted in Jesus and in His finished Work for Salvation- he isn't actually saved unless he then adopts the dietary laws of Moses. Likewise, modern-day Antinomians *always* measure how strong Grace is- by testifying as to how much Sin they can commit and still be saved.

### **4. Genuine Heretics Deny Jesus**

The name, “Jesus” is one of the most commonly used words in the vocabulary of all false Teachers. Yet the Bible says that these ungodly Heretics “deny” the 2<sup>nd</sup> Person of the Trinity. Now *some* historical Heretics, like “the Buddha”, outright deny the *existence* of anyone named Jesus. But the denial that Jude speaks of here- is a *denial* of one or more of Jesus' Character traits or Attributes- rather than a *denial* of His Existence.

So, for example, the Heretic Arius (AD 250-336)- believed in a real historical Man, named Jesus. But Arius *denied* that Jesus was “fully God”. And so, he invented a false Teaching that, in effect, relegated Jesus to be a “demi-god” or an Angel- a created being- rather than a full Person of the



Trinity.

Both the modern and ancient Gnostic Heretics also accept the fact that Jesus was a real person- but they deny Jesus' full Humanity.

Thomas Jefferson denied that Jesus performed Miracles; while modern orthodox Jews deny Jesus' full Deity. The ancestors of the Heresy of Pelagius (Secular Humanism) also deny any supernatural aspects about Jesus. False Teachers *always* have a problem with the God/Man Jesus- denying one or more of His Aspects.

Now I hope you have noticed that I have used some of what the **Epistle of Jude** has said about Heretics and false Teaching. And that is because **Jude** is the only Book in the New Testament that deals *exclusively* with this subject. But here in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Chapter of **2Peter**- we find that the Apostle writes almost identical to what Jude wrote in his Book. And this has caused much debate and discussion- with many people questioning the Inspiration of Peter's 2<sup>nd</sup> Epistle.

But here is another way of looking at it. Jesus had a brother named Jude (**Mark 6:3; Matthew 13:55**). Now actually, his name was "Judah" in Hebrew- but "Judas" in Greek. And "Judas" was a very common name back in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century. But just like it is hard today to find any German named, "Adolf"- after Judas Iscariot betrayed the Lord- no Jew wanted his name to be like his. So, "Judas" became "Jude." And Jesus also had another brother named, "James" who became very famous in the early Church (**Galatians 1:19; 2:9; 1Corinthians 15:7; The Acts 15:13**). But there were several "James" in the New Testament. So, please don't confuse *this* "James"- with the "James", who was the brother of the Apostle "John"- whom Herod killed about 10 years after the death of Jesus (**The Acts 12:2**).

So, when Jude writes in verse 1 of his inspired Letter that he is "**the brother of James,**" he is letting us know who he is. He is Jesus' real, fleshly brother.

Now if you read **Jude** alongside **2Peter 2** you will see immediately that there is a very close connection. Both use *similar* language; in a *similar* way; to denounce a *similar* false Teaching. And many scholars think that either **Jude** copied from **2Peter**; or else the writer of **2Peter** copied from **Jude**. But the relationship between the two is not *exact* like it would be if one copied the other. It's just close. But it is actually NOT the closest.

The *closest* analogy in the entire New Testament is the relationship between **Ephesians** and **Colossians**. Of the 155 verses in **Ephesians**- 73 of them have "verbal parallels" in **Colossians**. Yet, even then, the parallels are

not *exact*. So, Paul probably wrote both at about the same time; and he wanted to say much the same to two different communities. So, could this imply that **2Peter** and **Jude** have the *same* writer? Maybe, but there are very strong arguments *against* thinking that the *same* person wrote **1** and **2Peter**. The vocabulary and style in **2Peter** is very different from **1Peter**- but interestingly- they are very similar to **Jude**.

Now there is some evidence that Peter and Jude may have been *co-workers*. For example, in **1Corinthians 9:5**- Paul *implies* that Peter and Jesus' brothers traveled together. Now we can't be dogmatic about this- but if true- Jude and Peter *could* have had a relationship *similar* to Paul and Doctor Luke (or even Paul and Silas).

If so, then the tremendous similarity between **2Peter** and **Jude** may be explained by some sort of collaboration. In other words, it is possible that the Apostle Peter was illiterate his entire life. And that would mean that he dictated both of his Epistles to other writers. And when it came time for him to write his 2<sup>nd</sup> Epistle- Peter may have used Jude. So, it is Peter's mind and heart and thoughts and experiences- as inspired by God the Holy Spirit in 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter- but the Apostle simply used the literacy of Jude to actually write it down.

Now if this is true- it is important to know that Jude was NOT *impersonating* Peter- because, according to **2Thessalonians 2:12** and **3:17**- that was not tolerated in the early Church. Jude would have simply been *representing* him- as his agent. And the Jewish Teaching of the day said,

“A man's agent is as himself”

So, for example, when **2Peter 3:1** says,

“**This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you...**”

... there are at least two different plausible explanations:

- As his agent- Jude was in complete accord with the law and with custom of that day to speak this way *on behalf of* Peter
- The “letter” referenced here may well have been the **Epistle of Jude** rather than **1Peter**- *especially* since the content of the letter described in **2Peter 3:2** fits in better with **Jude** than it does with **1Peter**.

Now Jude may have left us one other hint in **2Peter** that he was the writer. Because the *best* reading for **2Peter 1:1** is "*Simeon* Peter" rather than "**Simon Peter**". And the only other person, who is recorded as using this Hebraic rendition for Peter was James- Jude's brother, in **The Acts 15:14** when he said,

**Simeon has related how God first concerned Himself about taking from among the Gentiles a people for His name.**

Now remember- Jude and James were brothers. And both of them were Jesus' own fleshly brothers. So, both Jude and James called Peter by his Jewish name (*Simeon*)- rather than the Aramaic name that Jesus gave him (*Peter*); or the Greek rendition of his name (*Simon*). So, by calling Peter, "*Simeon*"- at the beginning of **2Peter**- that is one more clue that Jude may have penned the letter on Peter's behalf.

Now this is NOT merely a literary exercise. It really matters for several reasons:

- It explains the difference in writing style; vocabulary; and content between **1&2Peter**
- It explains the similarity to **Jude**
- It eliminates the problem of forgery
- It preserves the Apostolic Authority of the Letter

Look, the bottom line is that our Confidence in the Truth of **2<sup>nd</sup> Peter** does not rest on the uncertain hypotheses about who wrote it- but on the Power of its Message to change us; and its coherence with other Apostolic Teaching. What we mean when we say that New Testament Books like **2Peter** are "inspired by God" is that God guided the minds of the Apostles- *and their agents*- to the degree that what they wrote down is both God's Will and God's Word. So, **2Peter** is Inspired; Inerrant; and Infallible and we can put our trust in what it says.

Now the main point of **2Peter 1**- which everything else either supports or elaborates is verses 10&11:

**Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never**

**stumble; for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.**

Peter wants us to *enjoy* the Certainty of our Salvation. He wants us to be so firmly established in God- that we cannot be shaken by any Temptation or false Teaching. And then in **2Peter 3:17b&18a** he draws his letter to a close with this Admonition:

**... be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness, but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ...**

So, Peter devotes his Last Will and Testament (1:14, 15) to help us be firm and stable and unshakable in our Faith.

And the way he helps us in Chapter 1- is by *reminding* us about God's precious and magnificent Promises. He *assures* us that if we trust firmly in these Promises- God's Power will flow into us and enable us to:

- Escape the corruption that is in the world by lust (v. 4),
- Grow in Self-control; Perseverance; Godliness; Brotherly Kindness; and Love (vv. 6, 7)

The old fisherman reminds us that the *Source* of these Promises- the Scriptures was NOT made ...

**... by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God (v. 21).**

... and not only that, but we have this “prophetic word” made even “more sure” by the eyewitness Experience of Peter- who literally saw Christ's Majesty on the Mount of Transfiguration (v. 16). So, the Confirmation of God's Word- leads to Confidence in His Promises, which brings us Power for Godliness; which, in turn, gives us a personal, *experiential* Confirmation of our Calling and Election.

And now comes Chapter 2, and a very significant change in Peter's Approach. I say a change in his *Approach*- NOT his *Goal*. Peter's overall Goal is still to make us Firm and Stable and Unshakable in our Faith. But his Approach in verse 2- is very different from Chapter 1. Chapter 1 is

mainly an Encouragement to avail ourselves of God's Power to lead lives of Godliness and Love. But Chapter 2 is mainly a Warning against the Destruction that will befall those who don't avail themselves of this Power. So, if Chapter 1 is the "carrot on the stick"- Chapter 2 is the "crack of the whip" over our heads. Yet there are no Commands; no Admonitions; and no Imperatives in Chapter 2; just a pure, terrifying Description of what will happen to those who fall prey to the false Teachers- who periodically rise up in the Church.

Now the main point; or the Goal of Chapter 2 is expressed in four places:

- The last part of verse 1: **"denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves"**
- The last part of verse 3: **"their Judgement from long ago is not idle, and their Destruction is not asleep"**
- Verse 12: **But these, like unreasoning animals, born as creatures of instinct to be captured and killed, reviling where they have no knowledge, will in the destruction of those creatures also be destroyed**
- The last part of verse 17: **"for whom the black darkness has been reserved."**

So, the main point of the entire Chapter is a Warning that Destruction awaits the false Teachers and their followers. And that means that Chapter 2 is the "other side of the coin" from what Peter said in **2Peter 1:10&11**. There he said,

**Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.**

But here in Chapter 2, the Apostle says, *"If you contradict the Doctrine and the Character of God's elect- YOU WILL FALL. There will be NO Entrance into the eternal Kingdom of our Lord for you- but instead, eternal Destruction in the darkness of Hell."*

What would we think of Commanders in the United States Military- who deployed their troops as though a War were simply a game; and who

never paused to ponder that on this or that Mission- Sons and Husbands and Fathers and Brothers will be maimed and/or killed? We would probably call those leaders- "heartless."

So, how much *more*, then, should we regard a Pastor; or a Teacher; or an Elder; or a Counselor as "heartless", who does not pause to ponder that literally- eternal Life and Death are at stake in what they Preach; and in what they Teach; and in how they Counsel? It is heartless to give the impression that, in the matters of Doctrine; and Faith; and Obedience- we are all just playing a game. It is heartless to foster the impression that the most- weighty Concerns of our Preaching and Teaching and Counseling are merely the "alteration of psychological states" and the "modification of behavior." If that were our most weighty Concern- then Preaching would simply be a sub-set of Psychotherapy; and Christian Doctrine would simply be another method to achieve "mental Health" and "well-being"; and the Church would simply be another "Institution" for the "advancement of the psychological and social welfare of people."

Now sadly, that is *exactly* the way more and more people view the Church and things like Preaching and Doctrine. But I say, *that* is being "heartless"- because it treats Life as though it were a game- when, in fact, eternal Joy in the Kingdom of Christ; and eternal Misery in the blackness of Hell- are at stake. So, *that* is our most weighty Concern. And that sets the Church of Jesus aside as completely distinct from all other human Institutions.

So, **2Peter 2** is there to keep me from being a heartless Pastor. It stops me from playing games in this Pulpit. It will not allow my Sermons to become pep- talks about the power of "positive thinking." It forces me to be dead earnest about my own Calling; and insulted and angry about all false Teaching; and seriously grieved over the Destruction of the ungodly. So, this Chapter is no accident in Holy Scripture, dear friends. It is the Word of God. And it is profitable for Teaching; for Reproof; and Correction; and for "training in Righteousness"- so that all, who have experienced the Miracle of the New Birth may become adequately equipped for every Work that can honestly be called, "Good".

So, let's begin to look at the first 11 verses of **2Peter 2**.

**1 But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon**

**themselves.**

Now whenever God gives Divine Truth- both satan and Man offer counterfeits. But it is important to note that no counterfeit can be offered by anyone- unless there has already been given the original Truth. So, the Truth is given *first*- and then satan (or evil men in line with satan) offer a twisted or perverted counterfeit.

Back under the Old Testament men periodically claimed to speak from God when God had not sent them (**Deuteronomy 18:20**). And in the New Testament Church- there periodically arose people, whose Explanations of Scripture and Applications of Apostolic Doctrine were false and destructive. So, even though Peter says here that false Teachers *will* (at some point) arise in the future- it is clear from the rest of this Epistle- that the Prophecy Peter gives- is *already* being fulfilled. The false Teachers are already on the scene.

Now the first thing we learn from Peter about these false Teachers- is that they are “denying” the Master “who bought them.” So, what does this mean? As with most Heresies, Jesus Christ is, in some way, being *diminished*- either by what these people are teaching or by the way they live their lives- or both. So, some Aspect of Christ’s Personhood; or His Work is being *denied; belittled; ignored; or rejected*. But Peter never tells us just what Aspect. In fact, you get the impression from Chapter 2 that the main Error of the false Teachers that was in Peter’s mind- was an Error in their own personal Morality- rather than in some area of Doctrine.

But what we must always keep in mind- is that Doctrine and Behavior are never really separated. How a person conducts himself and how they esteem Christ- ALWAYS rise and fall together. So, it is possible for a person to live in such a disobedient way- that Jesus is scorned and belittled by their very behavior. And that seems to be what was happening here.

And there is a clue to this in the little phrase, "**the Master who bought them**" (v. 1). Over in **1Corinthians 6:19&20**- Paul said,

**Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.**

... and Peter said in his first letter (**1:17-19**),

**If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay *on earth*; knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, *the blood* of Christ.**

Now when the Apostles spoke of souls being “bought” or “redeemed” by Jesus (as Peter does in verse 1), they pictured us as “slaves of Sin and of Satan”, being purchased and made free from Sin to then become bond-slaves of Jesus Christ- so we may have the honor and privilege of glorifying God in the way we live our lives. And the correct Context in both **1Corinthians** and **1Peter 1** has to do with “sexual Morality” (**1Peter 1:14; 1Corinthians 6:16&19**).

So, for anyone to be “bought” by Jesus Christ is for them to be freed from the tyrannical domination of sexual Passions that cruelly drive a human being into sexual preoccupations and illicit sexual intercourse. Through Salvation in Jesus- we now belong to a *new* “Master” Whose Promises of Joy and Love and Satisfaction and Hope are *infinitely* superior to the promises that illicit sex makes. And so, **1Peter 1:14** says that we can *escape* from those sinful desires and passions as we trust in Jesus. And when that happens- we *exalt* Jesus Christ and we then *affirm* His great Worth. But if we live in the grip of sexual domination, we *belittle* Christ and “deny the Master who bought us.”

Now there are some indications in this Passage that the false Teachers Peter has in mind- were propagating sexual Immorality “in the name of” Christian Liberty. For example, verse 2 says:

**Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be maligned.**

Now, notice that right after saying these people “**deny the Master Who bought them**”, it says that the seductive danger lies in their “**sensuality**”. Now “Sensuality” is just a fancy word for “blatant sexual Immorality”- which is Sexual Immorality with an arrogant (cf. 2:10, 18), debauched flare (see especially **Romans 13:13; 2Corinthians 12:21; 1Peter 4:3**). Try to remember what happened in Corinth. In **1Corinthians 5:1&2a** Paul says,

**It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and immorality of**



**such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father's wife. You have become arrogant and have not mourned...**

Here, Paul is equating NOT mourning over this unspeakable Sin with being arrogant. So, not only is this person committing this Sin- but he; and even the entire Church at Corinth had become arrogant; or bold; or were not being Convicted about it. And this very same attitude seems to mark the false Teachers in **2Peter**. For example, in 2:18 it says,

**For speaking out arrogant *words* of vanity they entice by fleshly desires, by sensuality, those who barely escape from the ones who live in error,**

So, to these false Teachers- Arrogance and Immorality go hand in hand. Notice verse 10:

**and especially those who indulge the flesh in *its* corrupt desires and despise authority. Daring, self-willed, they do not tremble when they revile angelic majesties,**

They are bold and self-willed." They "despise authority" because they cannot stand any control or accountability for their sinful passions. And this helps us to understand verse 1, where it says they "deny the *Master* who bought them." These people don't want any Master over them- because having a "Master" means someone else has Authority over them; and they must submit and be held accountable to that Master. So, they despise *all* Authority.

This begins to shed a lot of Light back on Chapter 1. For example, verse 4, where Peter tells us that the Promises of God enable us "**to escape from the corruption that is in the world by lust.**" And verse 6 where Peter stresses that we add to our Knowledge "Self-control." So, it becomes clear that, already in Chapter 1, Peter was choosing his words in view of the false Teaching he opposed.

But it seems almost impossible that such a thing as "arrogant sexual Immorality" could actually be taught in the Church. What did the false Teachers say? Verse 3 tells us,

**"In their greed they will exploit you with false words."**

... so. they didn't just come in and seduce people with good looks- they taught. And they gave reasons *why* people should *abandon* any Teaching that promoted Sexual Chastity. And their motivation for doing this was their own personal Greed. And so, they promoted everything from allowing children to experiment sexually; to couples living together out of wedlock. They taught that both Husbands and Wives could completely *abandon* their Marriage Vows and engage with other people to satisfy their sinful urgings. And if the Wife were to get pregnant- these Heretics also promoted Abortion.

So, we have to understand that there is nothing new about the contemporary assault on the sanctity of Marriage. Jesus wasn't gone for more than 30 years before false Teachers rose up in the Church- teaching that Sexuality was to be “open” as a “legitimate Christian lifestyle.” And you can see it in verse 19:

**promising them freedom while they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved.**

Sound familiar? The push for “free sex” is *ancient*. The false Teachers of Peter’s day were taking the Grace of God and *perverting* it into Sensuality and Licentiousness. They were teaching that what believers do with our bodies does not affect our Salvation. And some even taught that the *more* Sensuality a believer pursues- the *more* they demonstrate true Christian Freedom from the “straight- jacket” of Biblical Purity. So, “in the name of Grace” and “in the Name of Jesus Christ” they *perverted* Christian Sexual Purity, and in that way they “denied the Master who bought them.”

Now the Answer to give to a person (inside or outside the Church) who says that we are promoting Slavery to an old-fashioned sexual Ethic is:

- All *Immorality* is just as “old-fashioned” as Biblical Morality
- It is completely inconsistent to call our desire to govern our passions according to Divine Principles, “Slavery” while being driven by the dictates of our passions is called, “Freedom”

And that's what the rest of this Passage is about. So, the main point of verses 4–10 is to warn us that since it is clear that God has *severely* punished Unrighteousness and Sexual Immorality and Perversion in the past, He will absolutely punish it in the future. And Peter illustrates God's

Wrath with three different Old Testament examples in verses 4–8; and then draws his conclusion in verses 9 and 10.

So, verse 4 is the example of the fallen angels.

**For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment;**

What a lesson there is here! Angels are the most glorious and mighty beings under God. But all their Power and Dignity was of no use when they sinned. God was *unsparing* in His sentence. They were cast out of His Presence and are being reserved in “pits of Darkness”, until the great Day of Judgment when they will be consigned to the

**"... lake of fire and brimstone... and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever" (Revelation 20:10b).**

So, the false Teachers should learn from this that if they "*despise* authority" (v. 10) and *reject* the Lordship of Jesus Christ (v. 1), they will hear the Sentence which Jesus foretold in **Matthew 25:41,**

**"... Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels."**

The second example of God's Judgment is the case of Noah's generation in verse 5:

**And [if God] 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;**

So, if the false Teachers did not learn the example of the fallen Angels- let them learn from the Flood. God swept away the ungodly in Judgment. All but 8 souls. So, even though the rebellious and the licentious today may think they are safe, they should learn that

**... their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep. (v. 3).**

... Divine Judgment will come upon them with horrifying swiftness.

The third Example is the case of Sodom and Gomorrah in verses 6–8.

## **2Peter 2:6-8**

**6 and if He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing *them* to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly *lives* thereafter;**

**7 and if He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men**

**8 (for by what he saw and heard *that* righteous man, while living among them, felt *his* righteous soul tormented day after day by *their* lawless deeds),**

... so, if the Example of the fallen Angels and the Example of Noah's generation do not deter people from following the false Teachers, then surely the Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah will wake them up to God's Wrath. For these cities were judged for the very Sexual Perversion; Sensuality; and Licentiousness that the false Teachers were promoting.

And then to make the Lesson of History crystal clear- Peter states it in verses 9 and 10:

***then* the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment, and especially those who indulge the flesh in *its* corrupt desires and despise authority. Daring, self-willed, they do not tremble when they revile angelic majesties,**

And, of course, Peter doesn't just mean God knows *how* to do this. It means that since God has done this in the past- He will *absolutely* do it in the future. Destruction is not sleeping.

So, what do we learn from this? First, the Christian Church is NOT immune to false Teachers. And because that is true- we must make every effort to keep ourselves rooted and grounded in the Word of God- lest we lose our Stability and be carried away in Error (3:17).

Second, advocating Sexual Immorality in any way is a Heresy. It is a terrible Insult and Offense against Jesus Christ, the Lord. The Practice and Encouragement of any Sexual activity outside of the boundaries of Holy Matrimony- is an arrogant and blatant and public Denial of the Master who bought us. Jesus screamed in agony on the Cross to free us from the

domination of Sin- including all forms of sexuality outside of Marriage. So, we should glorify Jesus in our bodies by submitting to His Pattern of sexual Fulfillment.

Look, there is nothing new about “free sex.” It is ancient. But there is also nothing new about God’s crystal- clear Denunciation of it and His Judgment against it- either. So, we should denounce Sexual Immorality in all its forms; and reject it today as resolutely as the Apostles did.

Third, Divine Judgment is promised to those who deny Christ in this way. And it is cowardice and heartless then to encourage people to go about their business; and live their lives as though nothing very significant were at stake. Make no mistake about this, dear friends, Heaven and Hell hang on whether we follow Christ in Righteousness or deny Him in Sexual Immorality. Verse 9 makes it clear that God is absolutely determined to do two things about Sexual Immorality:

- **The Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation**
- **[The Lord knows how] to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment,**

Believers, who are tempted to sin, are told to run to Jesus for Safety; Deliverance; and Forgiveness- until the “storm” of Temptation passes by. And those who do- WILL BE embraced by Jesus; they WILL BE strengthened; and they WILL sin less.

But those who not only sin against God- but who do so *arrogantly*; *blatantly*; *openly*; with no remorse or Conviction- deny the Master; and put themselves in the position of making God their enemy. And History proves that God knows how to deal with His enemies.

Fourth, you can be saved from this Judgment- but only if you repent (turn from) and then trust the Master, Who bought you by His Own Blood. So, when Peter says, “**the Lord knows how to deliver the godly**” (v. 9), he doesn't mean that He only delivers the *perfect*. Lot was far from perfect. If you put your trust in Jesus Christ; and press on to love what He loves, Peter says,

### **2Peter 1:10&11**

**... you will never stumble; for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.**

Amen. Let's pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.