

Four Hundred to One

Sunday, 14 July 2013

13 - 2 Peter: A Blazing Faith

Text: 2 Peter 2:1-20, “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 Pet. 2:1)

Theme: Truth may be unpopular, but it will keep us from spiritual death and destruction.

Intro: Today, we enter into a dark section of 2 Peter. The words themselves are enlightening, but the subject matter is generally unpleasant—it’s all about false teachers and teaching. Peter is being like a **travel guide** on our journey of faith, showing us the plants and berries that are **poisonous**. I’m sure he would rather be pointing out the glorious history of the oaks of righteousness, but knowing the dangers around us is critical for our **survival** in the spiritual life that God has graciously granted us.

Just before this passage, Peter has taught us about the **source** and **reliability** of **Scripture**—he instructs us about the ministry of genuine Old Testament prophets. But he warns us: just as there was **true and false prophets** in their day, there are true and false teachers in our own. We need to be careful and know the signs of false teaching.

1) God does not want us to be naive about false teachers and false teaching—they are a real threat to our spiritual life. False teaching is like poisonous berries disguising themselves as good ones (2 Pet. 2:1-2).

- Deadly nightshade berries in Australia. “On the face of it, plants may **seem innocuous**, but some of them can be surprisingly **lethal** to humans who may come across their path.” (Sylvia Varnham O’Regan)
- There are about a **1000 species** of plants in Australia that are known to be toxic and they are often more **toxic** in drought
 - Even more species cause skin and eye irritation as well as rashes and discomfort
 - 10% of plants in Australia even make **cyanide**
 - One of the world’s most **venomous** plants is the **Gympie-Gympie stinging tree**. It can cause months of excruciating pain for unsuspecting humans.
 - It’s an **innocent looking** plant
 - In WWII **Cyril Bromley** fell into a stinging tree during military training. He was strapped to a hospital bed for three weeks and administered all manner of unsuccessful treatments. He became “as mad as a cut snake” from the pain. Another officer shot himself after using the leaf for toilet purposes. The sting is like hot acid and almost nothing compares to it. (Amanda Burdon)
- ****2 Chron. 18:1-27 (1 Kings 22:1-40) - The story of the prophet Micaiah****

- Ahab had the idea to attack a city in Aram, but Jehoshaphat wanted to inquire of the Lord.
- All the prophets were prophesying **success** and **prosperity**
- It was **400 vs. 1**. Only one was right and he didn't go along with the **crowd**; he went against the flow of **popular opinion**.
- Even though Jehoshaphat inquired of the Lord, he still did not listen. A warning for us.
- Micaiah was persecuted for preaching the truth
- **Matthew 7:15-20** and **Matthew 7:13-14** - what Jesus said
- False teaching is **popular**, yet **deadly**—even though it's **innocent** looking.

2) Watch out for any teaching that leads to loose living and devaluing God's Word (2 Peter 2:2-3).

- Peter's main concern is teaching that leads to **immoral** living
- Examine 1 Peter 2:1-4. What is Peter saying is the **nature** of false teaching
 - Denying the **Master**, the **Lordship of Jesus over your life**
- There are two major **ditches** on the sides of the **straight and narrow road** of truth: 1) **Libertarianism** and 2) **Legalism**.
 - Peter focuses on **libertarianism** or what is referred to as **Antinomianism**
 - **Lawlessness** (and legalism).
 - We need to have the **proper attitude** toward the law
- Wesley's battle with the Moravians, especially Philip Henry Molther in 1739, Wesley and his Century, pg 312-320, esp. 314, 319-320
 - The story behind the book
 - After the Fetter Lane Revival came false teaching
 - **Grace that has no grip, like the grease on the floors of a fast food joint**
 - **Mysticism over Scripture. Spirituality without Scripture.**
 - Don't let the **false** put you off the **truth**.

3) Don't fear! God knows how to deliver those who are genuine and judge those who are false (2 Peter 2:4-10).

- Peter's examples throughout history

4) Here are three "S" words that will help us sort the true from the false and will keep us safe from error.

- 1) Scripture, 2) The Spirit and 3) Submission to Christ Lordship.
 - Stick to the light and reliability of Scripture
 - Keep a pure heart, a heart that hates sin
 - Walk in love, not lusts
 - Don't follow the crowds, even the Christian crowd
 - Do not be influenced by those who speak against genuine spiritual authorities

Conclusion: If we follow the warnings Scripture gives us we do not need to live in fear of false teaching. Truth may be unpopular, but it will set us free.

END NOTES:

The tension between true and false prophets in Scripture. Micaiah. Jeremiah.

- The people tended to think the false prophets were true and the true prophets were false.
 - Do you know why?
 - People have a tendency to gravitate toward evil and deception—to what looks good on the outside but is dead within
 - We like to hear new things. We love novelty.

False teaching come in secretly, like seeds. You can find it on the Christian TV, in the bookstores and among preachers.

Heresy will destroy you, not necessarily outwardly at first but inwardly.

The nature of false teaching and why God allows it.

God's way of truth is a straight and narrow road. There are two major falsehoods on either side: 1) Libertarianism and 2) Legalism.

- Libertarianism gives people a license to sin. Also known as antinomianism, without law (spelling?). SEE WESLEY BOOK for an example.
 - God has done everything, you don't need to do anything. Live however you want to live because you are forgiven and under grace.
 - Greasy grace, grace that has no grip
 - This is the major false teaching Peter is combating.
 - Dr. Brown, dangers of hyper-grace
- The other side is legalism. Religion that's all about rules and regulations, rather than relationship.
 - The swinging of the pendulum.

God allowed the Israelites to have enemies so that they would not grow weak.

The test of the two trees.

The Lordship of Christ is foundational.

- Some only focus on Christ as Savior, but not as Lord.

“Many will follow” - not just a few

“sensuality”

ἀσέλγεια *aselgeia*; gen. *aselgeías*, fem. noun, from *aselgḗs* (n.f.), licentious, brutal. Lasciviousness, license, debauchery, sexual excess, absence of restraint, insatiable desire for pleasure. Mark 7:22, arrogance, insolence referring to words; 2 Cor. 12:21,

wantonness, lustfulness, excessive pleasure (also Rom. 13:13; Gal. 5:19; 2 Pet. 2:7, 18); Eph. 4:19, debauchery, perversion in general; 1 Pet. 4:3; 2 Pet. 2:7; Jude 1:4. Syn.: asōtía (810), wastefulness and riotous excess; epithumía (1939), lust; aischrótēs (151), impropriety, all that is contrary to purity; rhuparía (4507), filth; molusmós (3436), defilement; strénos (4764), insolent luxury; porneía (4202), fornication; akrasía (192), lack of self-restraint, incontinency; hēdonē (2237), lust, pleasure; kraipálē (2897), debauchery, glut, drunkenness.

Ant.: egkrátēia (1466), self-control; sōphrosúnē (4997), sobriety, the ability to limit one's freedom; élegchos (1650), conviction, restriction, control; aidōs (127), modesty, reverence.

What are the characteristics of false teaching and false teachers?

- Subtle (remember the serpent) and secret. It slips in.
- Seductive
- Sensual
- Greed & exploitation - motivated by money or popularity

Scripture gives us examples of God destroying the false and protecting the truth

- Satan's rebellion in the beginning
- Noah and the flood
- Sodom and Gomorrah & Lot

“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”

2 Tim. 4:1-4

Why God allows false teachers?

***Judges 3:1-8, Jud. 2:20-23 (cf. Deu. 7:22 - “little by little”)

- The enemies were left to test Israel and train them for war.

All my debates with strange teaching helped sharpen my understanding of the Bible. It helped me memorize and understand key passages.

The ice rescue that you saw on TV

ἀπώλεια apóleia; gen. apóleias, fem. noun from apóllumi (622), to destroy fully. Used trans. the losing or loss (Matt. 26:8), intrans. perdition, ruin. In the NT, apóleia refers to the state after death wherein exclusion from salvation is a realized fact, wherein man, instead of becoming what he might have been, is lost and ruined. Destruction, either temporal (Acts 25:16, death; Sept.: Deut. 4:26; Esth. 7:4; Prov. 6:15; Is. 34:5), or the second death which is eternal exclusion from Christ's kingdom, equivalent to apothnēskō (599), to die (Matt. 7:13; Acts 8:20; Rom. 9:22; Phil. 1:28; 3:19; 1 Tim. 6:9;

Heb. 10:39; 2 Pet. 2:1, 3; 3:7, 16; Rev. 17:8, 11). “Heresies of destruction” (a.t.) in 2 Pet. 2:1 means fatally destructive heresies.

αἵρεσις *haíresis*; gen. *hairéseōs*, fem. noun from *hairéō* (138), to choose, select. Heresy, a form of religious worship, discipline, or opinion (Acts 5:17; 15:5; 24:5, 14; 26:5; 28:22; 1 Cor. 11:19; Gal. 5:20; 2 Pet. 2:1).

In contrast to *schísma* (4978), schism which is an actual tearing apart, *haíresis* may represent a divergent opinion but still be part of a whole. One can hold different views than the majority and remain in the same body, but he is a heretic (*hairetikós* [141]). However, when he tears himself away (*schízō* [4977]), then he is schismatic. Heresy may lead to schism which is when actual tearing off and separation occur.¹

33.241 αἵρεσις^b, εως *f*: the content of teaching which is not true—‘false teaching, untrue doctrine, heresy.’ οἵτινες παρεισάξουσιν αἵρέσεις ἀπωλείας ‘they will bring in false teachings which are destructive’ 2 Pe 2:1.²

βλασφημέω *blasphēméō*; contracted *blasphēmṓ*; fut. *blasphēmésō*, from *blásphēmos* (989), blasphemous or a blasphemer. To blaspheme, revile. To hurt the reputation or smite with reports or words, speak evil of, slander, rail (Mark 3:28; 15:29; Luke 23:39; John 10:36; Acts 18:6; 19:37; 26:11 [cf. Acts 26:9]; Rom. 3:8; 14:16; 1 Cor. 4:13; 10:30; 1 Tim. 1:20; 6:1; Titus 3:2; James 2:7; 1 Pet. 4:4, 14; 2 Pet. 2:2, 10, 12; Jude 1:8, 10; Sept.: 2 Kgs. 19:6, 23). To speak with impious irreverence concerning God Himself or what stands in some particular relation to Him, to blaspheme, a transliteration of the Gr. word *blasphēméō* (Matt. 9:3; 26:65; Acts 13:45; Rom. 2:24; Titus 2:5; Rev. 16:9, 11, 21). In the NT generally syn. with *oneidízō* (3679), revile, and *loidoréō* (3058), to reproach (Matt. 27:39; Mark 15:29; Luke 22:65; 23:39; Rom. 3:8; 14:16; 1 Cor. 4:13; Titus 3:2; 2 Pet. 2:10; Jude 1:8); especially to revile God and divine things (Rev. 13:6). Reviling against the Holy Spirit (Mark 3:29; Luke 12:10) means to resist the convicting power of the Holy Spirit unto repentance.

Syn.: *hēttáō* (2274), to make inferior; *hubrízō* (5195), to insult; *kataráomai* (2672), to curse; *anathematízō* (332), to curse with an oath; *asebéō* (764), to be impious, disrespectful; *hierosuléō* (2416), to commit sacrilege.

Ant.: *eusebéō* (2151), to revere; *eulabéomai* (2125), to show reverence; *eúchomai* (2172), to vow, to offer a wish that is good; *eulogéō* (2127), to speak well of, bless.

Goliath’s Sword?

¹ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

² Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (414). New York: United Bible Societies.