

The Lord Knows How...

2 Peter 2: 1-10

*"¹But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves. ² **Many will follow their depraved conduct and will bring the way of truth into disrepute.** ³ In their greed these teachers will exploit you with fabricated stories. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping.*

⁴ For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them in chains of darkness to be held for judgment; ⁵ if he did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others; ⁶ if he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by burning them to ashes, and made them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; ⁷ and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by the depraved conduct of the lawless ⁸ (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard)— ⁹ if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials and to hold the unrighteous for punishment on the day of judgment. ¹⁰ This is especially true of those who follow the corrupt desire of the flesh and despise authority."

We live in a time where there us a lot of messages out there. So, how capable are we? With all the information out there, how capable are we able to do all the things we need to do, day after day, so we can stay the course?

Many of us are blessed with a lots of talent and gifts, so much so, that may feel as though we can fix just about anything, maybe even repair the torn relationships in our lives. Yet, at the same time, most of us feel inadequate.

So, as we face those feelings of inadequacy, how honest are we with ourselves, with others, as well as with God? Do we ignore the truth, pushing on with little hope or success? Do we find that there is a blurry line between what is truth, and what is a lie? Can we even tell the difference? Know this, Satan is clever and slick. He often causes us to deceive ourselves, even when we have been taught the truth. However, the Lord knows how to tell the difference, and He reveals to us the difference as we trust in Him. The difference between truth and lies, the Sovereignty of God and all of the possibilities found in living for Him.

Illustration:

In 1999, the New England Journal of Medicine, published a study concerning people bitten by dead snakes. The research was conducted by Dr. Jeffrey Suchard and Dr. Frank LoVecchio. Both men are toxicologists, at Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center in Phoenix, Arizona.

*Their interest in this study began because several years earlier, after admitting a patient who was bitten by a snake while gardening, something incredible happened. The man had cut off a rattlesnake's head with his shovel. Then, when he bent down to pick up the snake's head, it bit him. These doctors spent years focusing their research on the **dead snake phenomenon.***

They discovered that 15% of individuals being admitted for a snakebite, were bitten by a dead snake.

One of the toxicologists said, "We were surprised the percentage was that high. We were also surprised that most people didn't know dead snakes can still bite."

Their study revealed that Snakes have a reflex action, that continues even after being killed. For this reason, a decapitated rattlesnake, can still bite up to an hour after their death. Such information, can not only protect us from venomous snakes, but if we would think about it, it could provide a spiritual safeguard as well.

In the Word of God, Satan's classification is as a serpent, reminds us that ***he is still dangerous,*** even though Christ has delivered a fatal blow. We may celebrate his inevitable demise, but we should exercise wisdom, by remaining spiritually armed, until his funeral is complete.

We might grasp from this something simple, and that is that Satan's work is to deceive us, or cause us to deceive ourselves, ***by blinding us from the truth that we have not been trusting in the Lord completely.*** Many of us feel like we are capable, adequate, to do whatever needs to be done, and thus, we trust Him less.

It seems that complete trust is difficult for most people. Many of us are so capable, so talented, that we do not, perhaps we cannot, admit that we ***cannot save ourselves.*** Nor, can some slick talking, clever tonged, fancy dressed, false prophet. And if you don't think those false prophets are out there, be assured, they are...

Peter was so concerned about how many people were buying into the teachings of those false prophets who have manipulated the Word of God, for personal gain or profit, that he warned his readers to beware. The teaching being offered by many, looks good, sounds good, and even use some scripture, yet, those teachings maybe false. So, consider this: ***Do you know when false teaching is being lifted up? Can we tell when a false prophet has come into our midst?*** This is why Peter warns us, because at times, we struggle with this.

Let's look at this passage and see what Peter has to say.

First - False prophets and false teachers... what is the big deal?

"But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them--bringing swift destruction on themselves." 2PE 2:1

Do people truly care about what they are hearing or are being taught? In many cases, I don't think they do. Some feel as though life is good, because they are in church, or, listening to some preacher on the radio, tv or internet, so, I am good. But are they? Are they growing spiritually as they should?

There are a multitude of lessons for us to learn here:

1)False teachers are among us...

"But there were also false prophets among the people..."

Peter's caution, is not subjective, **meaning we can accept it or not**, rather, it is factual, and is intended to warn us that there are people among us, within the body of Christ, who are teaching false doctrine. Why does Peter tell us this?

He doesn't want even one of us to be overwhelmed, or to succumb to, this false teaching. To allow ourselves to swallow it wholly, and be deceived by the words of such a person.

Jesus taught,

"Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves." MAT 7:15

2) Introduction of destructive heresies...

"They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves. ² Many will follow their depraved conduct and will bring the way of truth into disrepute."

I have a concern for many who approach their walk with the Lord casually. What Peter says here is that they teach, not just a simple or mild variation from the truth, they are teaching a **"destructive heresy."** Meaning, when we allow ourselves to listen to it, absorb it, repeat it to others, that we are thus living by it, thus we're accepting it as truth. That it is slowly killing us from the inside out. We are dying spiritually, slowly, gradually, without even noticing it.

The Psalmist reminds us,

"Destructive forces are at work in the city; threats and lies never leave its streets." PSA 55:11 Satan can be at work all around us, so, be careful, about what you listen to in this world. There is a good chance, much of what we are hearing is not the truth. Some might think, "Can it truly hurt us that much?" and I would say, YES! Peter's warning is simple, **"watch what you accept as truth."** Compare it to the Word of God to see if it is the truth, or a lie.

Illustration:

A Highway patrolman pulled a gentleman over who was speeding and he had the perfect reason for speeding. He said, "But officer, I wasn't speeding; I was just trying to stay a safe distance ahead of that truck in back of me."

Excuses are a dollar a dozen, for what we do, or do not do, in our lives. Peter's advice, guard our hearts, because Satan is attacking all the time – and the end result could be a **"swift destruction."**

Second - Held for judgment!

⁴ For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them in chains of darkness to be held for judgment; ⁵ if he did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others; ⁶ if he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by burning them to ashes, and made them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; ⁷ and if he rescued Lot, a

righteous man, who was distressed by the depraved conduct of the lawless⁸ (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard)—⁹ if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to hold the unrighteous for punishment on the day of judgment.” 2PE 2:4-9

Peter reminds readers of the events which took place in the past. Why? Could it be to help us remember that when we choose to sin, we will stand before God in judgment. All of us, will answer for what we chose to do in life. Or, chose not to do.

I wonder, are we hearing what he says here? **“hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment.”** In the midst of an already horrible experience, caused by being disobedient to God, being under punishment, God holds them so they can’t get away from the judgment to come.

The Psalmist wrote, *“³⁴Hope in the Lord and keep his way. He will exalt you to inherit the land; when the wicked are destroyed, you will see it. ³⁵ I have seen a wicked and ruthless man flourishing like a luxuriant native tree, ³⁶ but he soon passed away and was no more; though I looked for him, he could not be found. ³⁷ Consider the blameless, observe the upright; a future awaits those who seek peace. ³⁸ But all sinners will be destroyed; there will be no future for the wicked.”* Psalm 37: 34-38

God knows what is going on in this world. He is not caught off guard by anything, or, anyone. Peter says, that the “ungodly” are going to pay a price for their lifestyle, and the price is extremely high.

When God saves His children from destruction on the Day of Judgment, He will deliver His enemies to self-destruction.

Illustration:

*A judge was horseback riding with a young lawyer when they came across an open stretch of country. They noticed a hangman's noose hanging from a tree. The judge turned to the lawyer and jokingly said: **"If that gallows had its due, where do you suppose you would be right now?"***

*The young lawyer spurred his horse a few feet forward, then turned back to the judge and answered, **"Riding alone."***

I wonder what our response would be, if the Lord has His due, what would happen to many because of their lifestyles? Something for many to think about?

One last thought!

Third - The rescue of godly men...

“If this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment.” 2PE 2:9

The Lord knows how to recuse Godly men from trials. What Peter is telling us is ***that the Lord knows those who are His!*** The Lord's wisdom is never at a loss concerning ways and means to deliver His children. And he knows who His children are.

The deliverance of the godly is the work of God. Deliverance from temptation, deliverance from trials, deliverance from total destruction, once we receive His grace, and then live in obedience to His teaching, He promises to deliver His children. ***"Recuse the Godly..."***

The Psalmist again reminds us,

"For he will deliver the needy who cry out, the afflicted who have no one to help." PSA 72:12

Key words, those who ***"cry out,"*** and the ***"afflicted"*** who have no one to help them.

Paul sought God's deliverance, and found it many times...

"Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves, but on God, who raises the dead. He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope, that he will continue to deliver us..." 2CO 1:9-10

Key words here: ***"In our hearts we felt the sentence of death,"*** at times we may have felt lost, however, ***"But this happened,"*** – what happened, Jesus' death and resurrection. Thus, ***"He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us..."***

On whom have you set your hopes? On - ***HIM- Jesus our Lord and Savior.*** Those who do not set their hope on Him, are going to be sadly disappointed.

So, ***Where, do we stand? Do you know Jesus as Lord?*** Perhaps, a better question might be, ***"Have we accepted His forgiveness? & are we living for Him right now?"***

Peter's warning for all who are easily lead astray, by popular teaching, easy gospel, prosperity teaching, and comfortable living, and our own desires in life, is focus on our Savior every day! If you're not where you need to be, why not? What is holding us back?

- There are always going to be false prophets and teachers among us...
- Those who live in wickedness, sin, without remorse, will be held for judgment by God....
- Our God is an awesome God, who waits to recuse those who call upon Him...

Have you made that call! Dial Him up right now. The number is - J-E-S-U-S as Savior...