

2nd Peter Series
Part 3
“Faith’s Contentions 1”

Last time we ended with Peter’s explanation for how we got the Word of God. “Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (1:21). Chapter 1 was about Faith’s convictions—or, the deep convictions we have regarding our faith in Jesus Christ.

Now as we begin chapter 2 we’re going to explore Faith’s Contentions.” Peter is going to deal with those who are denying the faith. He deals first with the *doctrine* of certain heretics (2:1-3a). Then he tackles their *doom* (2:3b-9). And finally he exposes the *deeds* of the heretics (2:10-22).

He begins with their *lying* message:

2:1 “But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction.”

A *false prophet* is someone who proclaims a lying message he claims to have received from God. Peter is looking back to the false prophets who plagued God’s people in OT times.

For instance, Jeremiah complained to God about “The prophets who speak falsely...and my people love to have it so” (Jer. 5:31).

Elijah was challenged by 450 false prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:19).

And Isaiah spoke about how God’s backslidden people said to the true prophets, “Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits” (Isa. 30:9-10).

Peter says that just as they had false prophets in those times, there will also be “false teachers among you.” False teachers are those who deliberately and knowingly distort or deny the truth of God.

They secretly introduce “destructive heresies,” creeping into the church beneath the radar. They may say “praise the Lord,” and “I love Jesus,” and other verbiage that leads the church to believing they are authentic Christians.

But Jesus warned “you will know them by their fruit,” the fruit of their doctrine, the outcome of their teaching, including how they conduct their own personal lives.

These things were happening in the early church. As we’ve already stated, 2 Cor., 2 Thes, 2 Tim, and 2 John were written to

counter false doctrine. There were the Gnostics who taught that Jesus had not really come in the flesh. There were the Judaizers who taught that you had to mix OT legalism with NT faith in order to be saved. Paul called their message, “another gospel.”

Peter says that they literally “deny the Lord that bought them.” They forsake the simplicity that is in Christ—salvation by grace through faith, and nothing more.

It goes without saying that many false teachers and false doctrines abound today. There is rampant liberal theology that denies every foundational doctrine of Scripture and reduces Jesus to simply a good teacher.

There are the Jehovah’s Witnesses who deny the Trinity, hell, the deity of Christ, and His bodily resurrection.

There is Mormonism which teaches the old lie of the devil that “you shall be as gods.”

And even Catholicism teaches many false doctrines, such as exalting the Virgin Mary to the level of Co-Redemptrix. They claim that a priest can change a wafer into the body, blood, soul, and divinity of the Lord Jesus. They offer, if the price is right, to get people out of a mythical place called purgatory, and so on.

Next, Peter describes their *moral* lives:

2:2 “And many will follow their destructive ways; because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.”

***Destructive* is from a word meaning *pernicious*, which points to a person who has abandoned all moral restraint and revels in indecent behavior. Ring a bell?**

This describes much of modern-day America. Peter says that these shameless apostate teachers will soon endorse as normal the most foul and filthy lifestyles imaginable. As Paul wrote in Romans 1, “Who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them” (1:32).

Next, Peter focuses on their motive:

2:3a “By covetousness they will exploit you with feigned words;”

***Covetousness* means “a craving to have more.” The idea is that these false teachers are in it for the money.**

And the word *feigned* is from the Greek word *plastos* from which we get the word *plastic*. It means the words they speak are fabricated or molded, craftily fashioned to deceive people in order to get their money. Essentially, Peter is describing spiritual con men.

In the second half of verse 3, he addresses the *doom* of these heretics:

2:3b “for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber.”

Their eventual downfall is assured. Judgment is at the door. Though it seems as if nothing will ever happen to them, as if their judgment is “slumbering” or has gone to sleep, it is as certain as the rising of the sun!

Next, Peter illustrates God’s willingness to judge by pointing out 3 separate entities that fell under His judgment, beginning first with certain angels that sinned:

2:4 “For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment.”

Sin did not begin on earth with Adam and Eve, it began in heaven with Lucifer and his angels. The “angels that sinned” falls into two categories. First, when Satan fell, he carried down with him a third of the heavenly host. Rev. 12:4 reveals,

“His (Satan’s) tail drew a third of the stars of heaven (angels) and threw them to the earth.”

Jesus said in Lk. 10:18, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.”

Lucifer became Satan, and the fallen angels demons. Their current sphere of activity is our planet. They actively hold our world in bondage. John writes:

“The whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one” writes John. (1 John 5:19)

These fallen angels work ceaselessly to hinder God’s purposes on earth, and harbor great hatred for the Jewish people and the Lord’s church.

A second group of fallen angels had a second and further fall. Jude tells us, “And the angels which kept not their first estate (their own principality), but left their own habitation, he has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day” (Jude 6).

Both Peter and Jude compare this incident to the sin of Sodom—that of going after strange flesh. As it was unnatural for men to lust after other men, these angels did what was unnatural in that they lusted after human women. In pursuit of this alien desire, they violated the order of their being, and brought down upon themselves the wrath of God.

Peter says their final judgment is on its way. In the meantime, God has incarcerated these twice-fallen angels to put a stop to the incalculable damage they would do if free.

So...God judged angels. Next Peter focuses on God's judgment of Noah's generation:

2:5 "And did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly;"

The Bible is clear as to why God brought the Great Flood in Noah's time. Genesis 6 says, "Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (6:5).

Mankind had sunk so incredibly low that not once did a good, wholesome, righteous thought ever enter his mind. Every one

of his motivations was only evil continually. You would have had better luck flying over the ocean and throwing a coin into the depths, then returning to try to find it than you would have had finding one righteous thought in the minds of the people of Noah's day!

The Bible also records that "the earth was filled with violent bloodshed" (6:11).

After giving the people of Noah's time 120 years to repent at the preaching of Noah, God sent the flood.

So God judged angels, God judged the world of Noah's time, and lastly, Peter will point out that God judged Sodom and Gomorrah:

2:6 "and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly;"

I've mentioned the Dead Sea in this series, how it receives water, but doesn't redistribute it—hence, it is a Dead Sea. It just so happens that the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah lie beneath the bitter waters of the Dead Sea.

From time to time, God will make an example of a person or nation to highlight what he thinks about certain sins. Peter says that God made “an example” of the sexual perversion rampant in those twin cities. It is His showpiece of what He thinks of Sodomy.

The overthrow of the pornographic and violent culture of Noah’s time, and the perverted culture of Sodom and Gomorrah stand side by side in Scripture.

It’s worth remembering here that Jesus predicted the world that saw His return would be both like Noah and Lot’s time.

So we are safe to assume, based on Peter’s words, that the end-times apostasy we now see coming into full flower will be accompanied by the growth of abnormal, vile wickedness throughout the world.

Next, Peter turns to the subject of Lot, Abraham’s nephew:

2:7-8 “and delivered righteous Lot, *who was* oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked 8 (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented *his* righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing *their* lawless deeds)”

Prior to sending His fierce wrath onto Sodom, God made a distinction between the righteous and the wicked. He delivered "righteous Lot" from the fires of judgment. He did the same with Noah, stating "Noah was a just man" (Gen. 6:9).

God delivered Lot because, though he had made a terrible mistake in moving his family into Sodom, he was right with God in his heart of hearts. Even so, he lost his family, fortune, and friends in Sodom.

Peter says that Lot was "tormented (vexed)" by the lawless, immoral lifestyles of the Sodomites. He both heard and saw things that tormented his soul.

He heard the obscenities, blasphemies, anger, and rage of this vile culture. He saw their bold and brazen perversions openly displayed without shame.

Any of this ring a bell?

God finally judged Sodom when sexual perversion was not just *an* alternative lifestyle, but was *the* lifestyle. Notice how God calls the homosexual lifestyle "lawless." It is against natural law, flying in the face of God's intent for the two genders.

In light of Lot's deliverance from Sodom, Peter encourages the saints:

2:9a "then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations..."

As God delivered Lot, he can and will also deliver you!

And God also knows how to deal with unrepentant, wicked men:

2:9b "and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment,"

The day of judgment is the Great White Throne judgment revealed in Rev. 20:11-15. It might seem as if they're getting away with their wicked behavior, but Peter says they are "reserved" for judgment. It will come as surely as the sun will rise tomorrow.

Peter goes on to describe the extent of their lawlessness:

2:10 "and especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority. *They are pre-*

sumptuous, self-willed. They are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries,”

The wicked in Peter’s crosshairs live unbridled, filthy, immoral lives and “despise authority.” The word “despise” means “to think lightly of something.” They have no fear God’s authority invested in people of position.

They even go so far as to “speak evil of dignitaries.” A “dignitary” denotes the magnificence, excellence, and glory of those to whom praise and honor were due. This includes not only earthly people holding high positions of authority, but also heavenly beings. The wicked show no respect for God given authority. They rail against dignitaries, both heavenly and earthly.

Our nation is infested with this attitude against authority. It is one of the indicators of our tragic drift from God.

Finally, Peter shows that even angels recognize the principle of honoring dignitaries:

2:11 “whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord.”

The example is found also in Jude 9:

“Yet Michael, one of the mightiest of the angels, when he was arguing with Satan about Moses’ body, did not dare to accuse even Satan, or jeer at him, but simply said, “The Lord rebuke you.”

Wicked people have no such wisdom!

