

Sunday October 24th 2010
From the Outside to the Inside
1 Peter to 2 Peter

1). 1Pe 1:6 ¶ *In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, 8 whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 receiving the end of your faith--the salvation of your souls.*

a). The subject of the letter we know as 1 Peter, which would also be true for all the other NT epistles, is clearly stated in our scripture at the end of v9 – it is the salvation of the soul.

b). And here in 1 Peter the salvation of the soul is set in a context of unjust suffering brought about by the actions of a third party –

c). 1Pe 2:18 *Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh. 19 For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. 20 For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. 21 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:*

d). 1Pe 3:17 *For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.*

e). And what we have seen over and over again, is that it is faithful obedience to the scriptures in the midst of the suffering that would result in the salvation of the soul - 1Pe 5:6 *Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, 7 casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.*

2). As we move into 2 Peter though the Holy Spirit's focus, through the pen of the Apostle, changes from the outside to the inside - 2Pe 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. 2 And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.*

a). 2 Peter then is a letter that deals with the salvation of the soul with respect to the attack of the enemy from within the church through the actions of false teachers who have stood away from the faith [that which we have come to call ‘apostasy’] and are drawing others, who should be in pursuit of the Kingdom, away with them. And according to our scripture they ‘secretly bring in destructive heresies’.

Secretly bring in = Greek – ‘pareisago’ = to bring in alongside.

What we would see from this is that the false teachers would teach much that is scripturally correct, but then alongside the truth they would introduce ‘heresies’ that if followed would lead to destruction – the loss of the soul at the Judgment Seat.

Heresies = Greek – ‘haireisis’ = properly, a choice = this is the choice of an opinion that is contrary to scripture.

b). And what we will notice immediately from our 2 Peter scripture is that standing away from the faith is not just a NT phenomenon, but was also present in the camp of Israel where there were false prophets.

c). There are 21 epistles within the NT and the Holy Spirit inspired 2 individuals to write complete books addressing the false teachers and their apostasy – These are, as we shall see, 2 Peter and the Book of Jude.

d). That the Holy Spirit should have false teaching as a focus is not really surprising as this is exactly what is prophesied before the church came into existence and exactly what is shown to have happened once the church has been resurrected/raptured.

e). There are 2 places in the NT where a complete dispensational history of the church is given – one is in Matthew Chapter 13 and the other in Revelation Chapters 2 and 3. And not surprisingly both show exactly the same outcome – a Church that begins soundly in the faith, the word of the Kingdom, at the beginning of the dispensation to a Church that has stood away from the faith by the end of the dispensation.

3). Mt 13:23 *"But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."* 24 ¶ *Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; 25 "but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. 26 "But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. 27 "So the servants of the owner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' 28 "He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Do you want us then to go and gather them up?' 29 "But he said, 'No, lest while you gather up the tares*

you also uproot the wheat with them. 30 'Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn."'" 31 Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, 32 "which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches." 33 Another parable He spoke to them: "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened."

a). We will remember from our study of the Matthew 13 parables that the subject of the parables is - Mt 13:19 *"When anyone hears the word of the kingdom,*

b). And we will also remember that our enemy does all he can to prevent those who hear the word of the Kingdom from producing fruit; either by stealing the word before it can take root, or by causing the one who hears to give up on the truth before they have a proper foundation through intimidation and persecution.

c). Inevitably though, some of the eternally saved do hear the word and do begin to produce fruit which brings about our enemy's action seen in the parables we have just read.

d). Each parable builds on the one that has preceded it and so in the parable of the wheat and the tares, the tares represent the original false teachers who were present in the church whose false message was for the purpose of stopping those who were producing fruit from doing so - Mt 13:36 *Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field." 37 He answered and said to them: "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. 38 "The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one. 39 "The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. 40 "Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age.*

e). And we should certainly note that the tares were already in the church, they are eternally saved, and did have a good understanding of the Kingdom.

f). As a result of their destructive work, we will remember, the church grew in a completely unnatural way – represented by the mustard tree. The birds of the air that nest in its branches are the emissaries of Satan who find a home amongst those following a corrupted message.

g). And the final parable we read, that of the leaven, gives us both the summation and the conclusion of the work of the tares.

h). The 3 measures of meal picture the complete, unadulterated Word of the Kingdom. Then into that unadulterated word leaven is placed so that it can do its destructive work until all is leavened.

i). Putting these 3 parables together then with the parable of the sower will give us a complete dispensational history of the church – a history given before the church is brought into being, that has the corrupting work of false teaching as its focus.

i). Ironically, you would only have to look at how our 3 parables are taught within Christianity generally to witness the work of the leaven at first hand.

4). In Chapter 2 of the Book of Revelation we find the complete church, all the eternally saved from this dispensation, standing before the Lord in Judgment, taking us into the future to the time of the resurrection/rapture. That which Christ then speaks in Judgment to the seven churches also provides a dispensational history of the church.

a). It begins with the church of Ephesus - Re 2:1 ¶ *"To the angel of the church of Ephesus write, 'These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands: 2 "I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; 3 "and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary. 4 "Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. 5 "Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place--unless you repent.*

b). It is with regards to Ephesus, the first of the seven churches, that we see that they have left their first love. This ‘first love’ would be a reference to the return of Christ to establish His Kingdom, and thereby the word concerning His return. The leaving of their first love would be synonymous with the work of the false teachers and would point to the introduction of the leaven into the 3 measures of meal at the beginning of the dispensation.

c). Then, by the time we get to the 7th of the seven churches, Laodicea, we find the same situation as at the end of the parable of the leaven when all has become leavened as a result of the work of the false teachers – Re 3:14 ¶ *"And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, 'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: 15 "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. 16 "So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. 17 "Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' --and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked-- 18 "I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your*

nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. 19 "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.

d). The good news is that although these chapters from Revelation show both judgment and history, they also provide warning. The last word from both our quotations – ‘repent’ – should provide both opportunity and comfort to any individual who finds himself following a contrary message.

e). So widespread and pervasive will this standing away from the faith be that when Christ returns He will not find the preaching of the Kingdom to any significant degree within the overall scope of Christendom - Lu 18:8 *"I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find [the] faith on the earth?"*

5). Ac 20:28 *"Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. 29 "For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 "Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. 31 "Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.*

a). Here in the Book of Acts, a time early on in the dispensation, we find Paul reminding the elders of the church in Ephesus that he had not ceased to warn everyone night and day with tears that ‘savage wolves’ would come in ‘not sparing the flock’ and that from within their number there would be those who would rise up ‘speaking perverse things’ [distorting, twisting the truth] who would ‘draw away disciples after themselves’.

b). And we would know of course from the account in Revelation that this is exactly what happened with disastrous results.

c). And if we really want to gage the effect of the false teaching we can see this in - 2Ti 1:15 ¶ *This you know, that all those in Asia have turned away from me, among whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.*

d). Phygellus = to run away from

e). Hermogenes = Hermes, one of the Greek deities, from a root word that means to speak.

f). Even in these names then we can see those who have run away from the truth in order to go with that which comes from another deity.

g). The very words that the Holy Spirit inspires Paul to speak, recorded by Luke, would take us back to that which the Lord said to His disciples in – Mt 7:14 *"Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it. 15 ¶ "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. 16 "You will know them*

by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? 17 "Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 "A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. 19 "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 "Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

h). 16 *"You will know them by their fruits.* Makes no reference at all to being able to tell if someone is eternally saved or not, but is solely used here with respect to the ‘false prophets’ and what can be seen in their lives.

i). In the Book of Jude they are described this way - Jude 1:16 *These are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts; and they mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage.*

j). The fruit we see being produced here is of course completely contrary to the fruit of the Spirit - Ga 5:22 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control.*

k). Eph 5:9 *(for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth),*

6). As we remember the names Phygellus and Hermogenes perhaps we can see in them that which Paul writes to Timothy in - 1Ti 4:1 ¶ *Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, 2 speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, 3 forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.*

a). In the latter times, which would cover the complete period of this dispensation, some will depart from the faith, they will literally turn aside from what they know, and they will give heed, they will pay attention to ‘deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons’. And this is something the Spirit of God says most distinctly.

b). As well as seeing this in the names Phygellus and Hermogenes the doctrines of demons would also take us back to the Matthew 13 parables and the birds of the air who found a home within the mustard tree, the same birds who stole the seed in Matthew 13:4.

c). And let’s also keep in mind that the doctrines of demons is not a teaching about things Satanic, but just that which is not what scripture teaches.

d). Our scripture says that those who give heed to these doctrines of demons will speak lies in hypocrisy –

Lies = Greek – ‘pseudologos’ = promulgating erroneous Christian doctrine:

Hypocrisy = Greek – ‘hupokrisis’ = acting under a feigned part

So the idea is that those who ‘depart from the faith’ begin speaking that which is contrary to sound doctrine, but they do so whilst giving the appearance of being a Kingdom seeking believer.

e). And according to the scripture they do this ‘having their own conscience seared with a hot iron’.

Conscience = Greek – ‘suneidesis’ – from a word meaning to see completely, to understand.

Seared with a hot iron = Greek – ‘kauteriazō’ = to brand ("cauterize"), i.e. (by implication) to render un-sensitive

The idea here then would be that because of their adherence to that which is contrary to sound doctrine they become un-sensitive to that which is sound and are therefore incapable of receiving with meekness the implanted word which is able to save our souls.

7). With regards to elders as we saw last week, Paul writes this to Titus – Tit 1:9 *holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict. 10 For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, 11 whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain.*

Deceivers = Greek – ‘phrenapates’ = a mind-misleader, i.e. seducer:--deceiver.

a). And we would see here the necessity for the elder of holding fast the faithful word, the word concerning the faith so that he may both exhort and convict by the use of sound doctrine.

b). Set over against the absolute necessity for sound doctrine we then find this in - 2Ti 4:2 *Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.*

c). Not only will there be those who will not endure sound doctrine, those who do not want just the ‘pure milk of the word’, but there will no shortage of those who will be prepared to fulfill their desire by assuming the role as their teachers.

8). In the Book of Jude, which is a companion Book to 2 Peter, these same false teachers are referred to as - Jude 1:12 *These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves. They are clouds without water, carried about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots; 13 raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.*

a). And if we then continue on into v17 we find reference to the warnings given by the Apostles concerning them - Jude 1:17 *But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ: 18 how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts. 19 These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit.*

b). And Paul speaks of these very people in - Ro 16:17 ¶ *Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. 18 For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.*

9). What we must conclude from looking at all this is that false teaching has existed even from the days of the first generation of Israel to come out of Egypt and has been rampant in the church even from its inception, and was shown to be so by the Lord Himself from before the church began.

a). The numerous warnings we see throughout scripture and particularly the fact that we have 2 complete books written on the subject should cause us to take heed to ourselves and to remain sober and vigilant.

b). The good news is of course that scripture has built into it its own safeguards by which the truth of the word can be protected and maintained and we would find this in a scripture that we will know very well - Isa 28:9 ¶ *"Whom will he teach knowledge? And whom will he make to understand the message? Those just weaned from milk? Those just drawn from the breasts? 10 For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, Line upon line, line upon line, Here a little, there a little."*

c). 1Co 2:13 *These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*

d). Joh 16:13 *"However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.*