

Sunday December 12th 2010
The Second of Peter
Part Four

1). 2Pe 1:19 ¶ *And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; 20 knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, 21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.*

a). We had seen last week that Peter had reminded his readers of his experience upon the ‘holy mountain’ as he, with James and John, witnessed the transfiguration of the Lord; an event that came after 6 days, on the 7th day, prefiguring the coming Millennial Kingdom of Christ.

b). But we had also seen in our verses here that despite the enormity of what he had experienced upon the mountain the Holy Spirit draws our attention to the fact that it is the scriptures and the scriptures alone that provide the absolute authority and the absolute proof and the absolute surety of the Christ and His coming Kingdom.

c). And our final verse, v21, points to the absolute veracity of the scriptures as they have not come through the minds of men in pursuit of their own agendas, but are rather the inspired work of the Holy Spirit with respect to the revelation of God’s plans and purposes for Man - 2Ti 3:16 *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

d). And so in the first 21 verses of our Book Peter has dealt with faith in relation to the salvation of the soul, culminating with the faith that must be placed in the scriptures as the complete, inerrant word of God to which nothing needs to be added and nothing needs to be taken away – scriptures that interpret themselves and are their own commentary.

e). Now what we see in these 21 verses establishes the standard by which we are to stand, so to speak, so that we can understand exactly what it is that the false teachers stand away from as it is to apostasy, a standing away with respect to the faith, that the Holy Spirit now directs our attention.

f). To say this again in a different way – the false teachers would seek to change the process that leads to spiritual maturity by making it something other than it is or to do away with it completely and in doing so will also challenge the veracity of the scriptures. Not necessarily denying their Divine inspiration,

although this is prevalent in Christendom today, but by asking in many forms without necessarily saying the words, the age old question first posed by the serpent in the Garden, recorded in Genesis 3:1.... ‘Has God indeed said’

2). 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). Chapter 2 begins with the word ‘but’, taking us back to the previous verses – even though the word of God is completely of Divine inspiration and without error, ‘there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you...’ – Those who will teach something outside of that which is Divinely inspired.

b). And this of course is the very same thing we find in the parallel section of the Book of Jude - Jude 1:3 ¶ *Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. 4 For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.*

c). In Jude we will remember we are exhorted to ‘contend earnestly for the faith’, an ongoing action that is described for us in 2 Peter 1:5-7 and this ‘striving with every effort’ is necessary, ‘For certain men have crept in unnoticed’, ‘there will be false teachers among you’.

d). And we will remember that the rise of the false teachers and the subsequent apostasy that would follow their false teaching is exactly that which the Lord had prophetically spoken in the Matthew 13 Parables. But I wonder if we realize that Matthew Chapter 13 is not the only place that the Lord addresses the issue of false teaching?

3). Mt 5:1 ¶ *And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. 2 Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying: 3 ¶ "Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

a). Matthew Chapter 5 begins a connected sequence of teaching that we have come to call ‘the Sermon on the Mount’ – a teaching that the Lord gives to His disciples concerning entrance into or exclusion from the Kingdom of the Heavens. Within its context this teaching would have to do with the nation of Israel, the nation to whom He came with the offer of the Kingdom. However, once Israel has

rejected the Kingdom and the offer is removed from them, then what is taught in these Chapters of Matthew in reference to the Kingdom can only be relevant to those to whom the Kingdom of the Heavens is now being offered – eternally saved Christians within this dispensation – that is to say ourselves.

b). If we follow this teaching into Chapter 7 of Matthew we are going to find something very familiar - Mt 7:13 *"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. 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.*

c). In a parallel verse in Luke we find this - Lu 13:24 *"Strive [agonizomai] to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able.*

d). And so what do we find here? We find an exhortation to enter by the narrow gate and this is something we must 'strive' to do, a word in its intensified form that we have translated 'contend earnestly' [epiagonizomai] in Jude, followed by the warning, 'Beware of false prophets', because of the apostasy they bring with them that leads to the broad way of destruction.

e). And this is exactly the same pattern that we have seen with regards to the relationship between 1 Peter and 2 Peter and the relationship of the NT epistles as a whole to the Book of Jude.

f). The Lord tells us that the false prophets will come to us in sheep's clothing – they will look like sheep, they will sound like sheep, they will smell like sheep to the extent that they will be indistinguishable from the real sheep, but on the inside they are 'ravenous wolves'.

g). Ravenous = Greek – 'harpax', *har'-pax* from 'harpazo', *har-pad'-zo* = to seize (in various applications):--catch (away, up), pluck, pull, take (by force).

h). The idea in this word then is to take for oneself and we cannot help but note the predatory imagery that goes along with it.

i). But let's please note the desire to take for oneself is inward and to the outside the false prophets look like sheep and continue to look like sheep. So how do we recognize such a person? One way only - 20 *"Therefore by their fruits you will know them.*

j). Jude 1:16 *These are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts; and they mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage.*

k). Ac 20:29 *"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.*

l). It is those who come in sheep's clothing who are identified in Matthew Chapter 13 as the 'tares' and their purpose is 'to draw away the disciples after themselves' through a message that does not line up with the word of God, but would be appealing to the carnal nature even though it would appear spiritual.

m). This would cause those who would follow their message to stand away from the faith and begin to produce fruit in a field other than Christ's.

4). The Lord having given the warning concerning the false prophets then continues by showing the consequences for not only the false prophets, but also for those who have followed their false message - Mt 7:21 ¶ *"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' 23 "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!"*

a). V21 is one of 7 scriptural statements that teach exclusion from the Kingdom of the Heavens, and we will see that there is a distinction made between those Christians who say to Him, 'Lord, Lord' and have done the will of His Father in Heaven and those Christians who say to Him, 'Lord, Lord' and did not.

b). Now the interesting and shocking thing here we don't really see in the English, but in the original Greek our verse that says - 22 *"Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?"* is written in such a way as to show that those who make these statements were expecting a positive affirmation from the Lord. They were expecting Him to say, 'Yes, you have prophesied in My name, cast out demons in My name and done many wonders in My name' – which makes the answer He gives to them even more shocking, at least from their perspective - 23 *"And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!"*

c). So let's be absolutely clear here, according to the scripture there will be many at the Judgment Seat who will genuinely believe that they have been performing works in the Lord's name who will be shocked to find that they have done no such thing as their actions have in fact been contrary to the will of God.

d). Let's spend a moment and look at these – and as we do so it is not surprising that we begin with prophesying in His name.

e). Prophesied = Greek – 'propheteuo', *prof-ate-yoo'-o* = to speak forth

f). Now this word can go beyond this meaning to encompass a prophetic utterance itself, but neither the verses here nor the context within the Sermon on the Mount would allow for that.

g). This is the same word, but used as a noun rather than a verb, that is translated 'prophets' in v15 and is also translated 'prophets' in 2 Peter 2:1. And within 2 Peter 2:1 the 'false prophets' are identified as 'false teachers' and are synonymous with the 'false teachers' in Jude.

h). And so this whole picture here is of a servant of the Lord, an eternally redeemed Christian, who is either an apostate himself, or has been misled by the teaching of apostates, who is now teaching something which is not in accord with the word of God. And therefore could not have been taught in the Lord's name.

i). And clearly, prophesying outside of His name, speaking that which God has not said, must come first as it is through such a distortion of the scriptures that casting out demons and doing many wonders becomes an accepted practice within Christendom, whether Catholic or Protestant.

j). If there was a proper scriptural understanding of the unique relationship between signs, wonders and miracles and the casting out of demons and the offer of the Kingdom of the Heavens to Israel then a Charismatic movement could not come into existence. But when things are taught, in all sincerity by those who teach them, that do not line up with scripture's own checks and balances against error then what we are left with is a profound mess and an even more profound shock at the Judgment Seat for those who have embraced the lie rather than clinging to the truth - 23 *"And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"*

k). Let us just remember something that is all too readily overlooked – 2Th 2:9 *The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, 10 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, 12 that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*

5). Let's also remember that at the Judgment Seat all Christians will be judged solely and exclusively on their works. And if our works are to remain so that we receive a reward, a position of rulership with Christ in the Millennial Kingdom, then those works must accomplish the will of God – this would be faithful

obedience in the task or tasks that the Lord requires of us resulting in fruit production.

a). Suffering loss at the Judgment Seat, having to ‘depart’ from Him would involve the exact opposite – not having accomplished the will of God – unfaithfulness in the task or tasks that the Lord requires of us resulting in no fruit production.

b). And according to the clear evidence of scripture the end of this present dispensation is to be marked by an increase in demonic activity, an increase in false teachers and Christians being ‘tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine’ – a quick glance at ‘Christian’ TV or a walk round a ‘Christian’ bookstore will amply demonstrate this.

c). The only safeguard we have, and it really is a good one, in the midst of this deluge of error as the winds of doctrine become almost tempestuous, is the Word of God and the indwelling Holy Spirit Who can take the Word received into our saved human spirit [providing the word is received correctly] and then guide us into all truth, thereby providing ‘all things that pertain to life and godliness’.

d). This seems to be the place that the Lord has had us camped out for a good while now – I guess the only question is, ‘What will we each choose to do with it?’

d). 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,*

e). 2Ti 4:3 *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;*

6). Now all of this brings us back full circle to - 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). Secretly bring in = Greek – ‘pareisago’, *par-ice-ag'-o* = to bring in alongside.

b). 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 which is not correct, that if followed would lead to destruction – the loss of the soul at the Judgment Seat and to hearing the words, ‘depart from Me I never knew you...’

c). Heresies = Greek – ‘hairesis’, *hah'-ee-res-is* = properly, a choice = this is the choice of an opinion that is contrary to scripture.

d). And so we would see then as we look at these definitions, that to ‘secretly bring in destructive heresies’ is much easier than we may have imagined and much more insidious than we may have thought.

e). And the extent of the departure from the truth can even go as far as ‘denying the Lord who bought them’.

f). There are many so called theologians in the world today who refute Christ’s divinity, who do not accept His virgin birth and challenge His resurrection and all of this would come out of the work of the original tares, the original apostates –1Co 15:12 ¶ *Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?*

g). But we need to realize that denying the Lord is not exclusively in the realm of such gross error as this. If we revisit the life of Peter for a moment we will see denying the Lord on an entirely different level.

h). Mt 26:33 *Peter answered and said to Him, "Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble." 34 Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you that this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." 35 Peter said to Him, "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!" And so said all the disciples.*

i). At first glance there appears to be steadfastness here and courage, but this is, as we will remember, Simon Peter’s flesh speaking, and he is not hearing what is being said by the Lord. He is not being mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.

j). The Word of God has said the way it is to be, but Peter chooses to set that aside in favor of what he wants to believe as the truth. And in so doing he is denying the Lord.

k). This would be the path trodden by all those who would embrace error. God’s word says what it says and we just need to accept it, but if we choose to challenge parts of it because we don’t like what it would mean for us, or if we twist it so as to make it say something it doesn’t say, or if we want to give our opinion as to what God really meant, then we are denying the Lord who bought us – 1Co 6:19 *Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.*

l). Now as a result of denying the Lord our scripture says, *and bring on themselves swift destruction*

m). Please note who bears the responsibility for this, they ‘bring on themselves’ swift destruction. And this is not referring to judgment in the present, but at the Judgment Seat their destruction, their removal from the Kingdom, will be instantaneous.

7). *2 And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.*

a). V2 is one of those very sad verses as we see that ‘many’ will follow them to destruction, literally to go with them to the point of termination.

b). The word translated ‘way’ here is the word ‘hodos’ that we had seen last week meaning a road. And so, because of following not only the teaching but also the practice of the false teachers, as they walk down a road that is contrary to the truth, the true path, the road of truth that is abundantly supplied into the Kingdom is spoken against [literal meaning of blasphemed].

c). And this would be inevitable, as all those heading down the wrong road must speak against the right road, or they would have to admit their error. Now this is not impossible, but those with the humility, the meekness enough to do so, probably wouldn’t find themselves in error in the first place.

d). And if we revisit a verse we looked at earlier we will have yet another perspective on this - 2Ti 4:3 *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;*

e). What we would realize then that it is not just a case of ‘many’ being deceived, with the implication that this would almost be against their will, but that there would be many who would be actively looking for something outside of ‘sound doctrine’, the road of truth, something that would appeal to a desire or need that they mistakenly think ‘sound doctrine’ doesn’t address, or perhaps does address but not in a way they want to accept.

f). And in this thought we might be reminded of Israel in the wilderness and their attitude to the manna - Nu 11:4 ¶ *Now the mixed multitude who were among them yielded to intense craving; so the children of Israel also wept again and said: "Who will give us meat to eat? 5 "We remember the fish which we ate freely in Egypt, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic; 6 "but now our whole being is dried up; there is nothing at all except this manna before our eyes!"*

g). I think we can see a direct correlation here between 2 Timothy 4:3 and Numbers 11.

8). 2Pe 2:3 ¶ *By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber.*

a). The first half of our verse here has to do with a desire for more, ‘covetousness’ and the thought here is of making money.

b). Exploit you = Greek – ‘emporeuomai’, *em-por-yoo'-om-ahee* – from which we get our English word emporium = a market place.

c). Deceptive = Greek – ‘plastos’, *plas-tos'* = to mould

d). The whole idea here then is of the false teachers molding or making their words in order to sell in the market place, which would literally be those who would 'buy in' to their lies. And all this would be done for the purpose of turning a profit.

e). Our scripture goes on to say though that the judgment for the false teachers and those who follow them has not been idle and that their destruction does not slumber.

f). What we see here is a very graphic and disturbing picture as this judgment is pictured as a living thing that is awake and expectant; a judgment that like a predatory animal has 'for a long time' been headed on a collision course with the false teachers and their followers that will have its impact at the Judgment Seat.

g). Jude, in a parallel section in his letter, reminds his readers of a previous judgment that should serve as a warning for what is to come for those who stand away from the truth - Jude 1:5 *But I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe.*

9). It is at this point in both 2 Peter and Jude that God's past history of Judgment is brought to the fore as proof positive of what yet awaits all in the future who abandon the truth.

a). Jude 1:6 *And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day;*

b). 2Pe 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;*

c). And it is here with God's history of judgment that will we continue next week if the Lord is willing.