

Sunday January 9th 2011
The Second of Peter
Part Seven

1). 2Pe 2:10 ¶ *and especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority. They are presumptuous, self-willed. They are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries, 11 whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord.*

a). We had seen last week how the false teachers, the ungodly, those who stand away from the faith may also have their apostasy characterized by their attitude towards God's authority.

b). We had seen, that like the fallen angels in the ancient world, apostate Christians can set aside the authority that God has reserved for them in the age to come by following a course that is contrary to God's purpose – an action that is also referred to as defiling the flesh.

c). And we saw that setting aside God's authority can also be demonstrated through 'speaking evil of dignitaries' – murmuring and complaining against those God has placed in positions of authority within our present experience.

d). This could of course refer to Satan and his angels who are still God's appointed authority over the earth until He removes them. And it could also refer to earthly rulers during the times of the Gentiles whose appointment to that position is, according to scripture from God - Ro 13:1 ¶ *Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.*

e). Da 4:17 *'This decision is by the decree of the watchers, And the sentence by the word of the holy ones, In order that the living may know That the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, Gives it to whomever He will, And sets over it the lowest of men.'*

f). But we had also seen how this same truth would apply within the 'church' setting with regards to those God had set in place to shepherd His church in order to lead His people to the land that is promised. The example for this being of course the first generation of Israel to come out of Egypt – a generation that is presented in scripture as an example for us - 1Co 10:10 *nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. 11 Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. 12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.*

g). Although it does not have the political correctness that modern Christianity may crave the scripture is still very clear - Heb 13:17 *Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.*

h). And not only would we see God's appointed authority within the eldership of the church but we would also have to acknowledge it within the marriage relationship, the parent/child relationship and the master/servant relationship.

i). To set aside any of these God appointed authorities or to murmur against them, given the evidence of scripture, is to set aside or murmur against God Himself; something that God did not tolerate in the old creation in Adam and will not tolerate in the new creation in Christ.

j). And what we need to grasp in this is the very thing we encountered in 1 Peter over and over again, which is, that we are to trust God and be faithfully obedient to the scriptures irrespective of our circumstances, and most especially if our circumstances are difficult - 1Pe 4:19 *Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.*

k). Lu 12:4 *"And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. 5 "But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell [Gehenna]; yes, I say to you, fear Him!"*

l). And we may recall that the false teachers are described in our opening scripture as *They are presumptuous, self-willed* – the word translated 'presumptuous' meaning that they conduct themselves without fear – they would seek to find any reason to remove themselves from a difficult circumstance, because there is not a proper fear of God, because their focus is on the now, being arrogant enough to believe that they should be exempt from the consequences of their possible wrong choices, looking for their best life now rather than focusing on what awaits them in the Millennial Kingdom if they would but patiently endure. Jas 5:10 *My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience.*

2). The scripture then goes on to say - 2Pe 2:12 *But these, like natural brute beasts made to be caught and destroyed, speak evil of the things they do not understand, and will utterly perish in their own corruption, 13 and will receive the wages of unrighteousness, as those who count it pleasure to carouse in the daytime. Jude 1:10 *But these speak evil of whatever they do not know; and whatever they know naturally, like brute beasts, in these things they corrupt themselves.**

a). 'But these' at the beginning of 2 Peter 2:12 takes us back to the false teachers of v10 and makes a contrast between them and the angels of v11.

b). Angels '*who are greater in power and might, do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord.*' But these false teachers are not like the angels in their understanding, rather they are like 'natural brute beasts' giving us a very distinct contrast between the two.

c). Now the thing about the natural brute beast is that it lives entirely out of its instincts. It is in one sense entirely soulical. The focus will be on self to the exclusion of all else. It is born for the purpose of being captured and destroyed and there is inevitability in this that should be transferred to the false teacher. The end of the false teacher is just as inevitable, because of their actions, as the end of the brute beast.

d). V12 continues by telling us that the false teachers 'speak evil of things they do not understand'

e). Understand = Greek – 'agnoeo', *ag-no-eh'-o* = not to know (through lack of information or intelligence); by implication, to ignore (through disinclination):--(be) ignorant(-ly), not know, not understand, unknown.

f). What we would see in this word then is not just a lack of information, but within our context of standing away from the faith, a deliberate choice to ignore. And that truth which is ignored is then spoken evil of.

g). The obvious example of this would be the one we have looked at concerning 'speaking evil of dignitaries', speaking against the ordinance of God with respect to our being subject to the same. But this would also apply to any other part of scripture that would be purposely ignored and is the very thing that we saw in - 2Pe 2:2 *And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.*[same word translated 'speak evil of']

h). V12 concludes - *and will utterly perish in their own corruption* – which literally translated would be 'shall in their destroying surely be destroyed' - in order to understand this let's remember the first verse of Chapter 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,*

The false teachers secretly bring in destructive heresies, a corruption of the word of the Kingdom, which will lead those who follow that corrupted word, who follow their destructive ways, to destruction with regards to the Kingdom Age at the Judgment Seat. This is the same situation that existed with regards to the offer of the Kingdom to Israel at the Lord's first advent - Mt 23:13 ¶ *"But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.*

i). So then, the work of the false teachers, will bring destruction to those who follow them and in this sense they are ‘destroying’ and in this act of destroying, or in other words, because of this act of destroying, they will themselves ‘surely be destroyed’.

3). *13 and will receive the wages of unrighteousness, as those who count it pleasure to carouse in the daytime.*

a). Unrighteousness will be the wages for these false teachers - remembering that each of us will receive payment commensurate with our actions Job 34:11 *For He repays man according to his work, And makes man to find a reward according to his way.*

2Co 5:10 *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.*

b). For the faithful Christian the works that come out of their faithful obedience are classified as ‘righteousness’; a righteousness that is given to them by God, just as we see in the example of Abraham recorded in - Jas 2:21 *Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? 22 Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? 23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God.*

c). This is not the imputed righteousness of Christ that we receive at our birth from above, but could be best understood by the analogy of savings deposited on our behalf in a bank account. Our works of faithful obedience are exchanged for righteousness which is held for us in readiness for the Judgment Seat.

d). This is why Matthew 6:33 tells us - Mt 6:33 *"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*

e). This whole flow of thought would then lead us to the events that follow the Judgment Seat where we find - Re 19:7 *"Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." 8 And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.*

f). All that to say this then, the wages received by the faithful Christian, the Christian who does not stand away from the faith, is paid in the currency of righteousness which results in glory and a position of rulership in the Kingdom.

g). For the unfaithful Christian, those classified as ‘ungodly’ and ‘unjust’, those who stand away from the faith, their work in a field other than Christ’s also produces wages, but the wages they receive is in the currency of unrighteousness

which results in no glory and a 1000 years in the ‘blackness of darkness’; an outcome in complete antithesis to that of the faithful Christian.

h). Ro 6:23 *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

4). V13 continues - 2Pe 2:13*They are spots and blemishes, carousing in their own deceptions while they feast with you, 14 having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin, enticing unstable souls. They have a heart trained in covetous practices, and are accursed children.*

a). Here we see a further description of the false teachers as ‘spots and blemishes’ a phrase that might remind us of - Eph 5:26 *that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.*

b). It is Christ’s work through the ministry of the Holy Spirit to cleanse His Bride through ‘the washing of water by the word’ – this cleansing, which would be the same as the transformation spoken of in Romans 12 is to prepare those who will comprise His Church for receiving glory so that the Church is without spot or wrinkle or blemish.

c). For the false teachers though, and of course for those who follow their teaching, this cleansing does not take place because the word is corrupted therefore those who are not cleansed, who are not transformed, remain spots and blemishes just as our scripture says.

d). Rather than being cleansed they are instead ‘carousing’, literally reveling in or luxuriating in their own deceptions. There is a sense here of them being drunk with the lie they have believed. And they do this ‘while they feast with you’.

e). The companion scripture in Jude would give us extra insight into this - Jude 1:12 *These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves.*

f). Now within an historical context the ‘love feasts’ were feasts provided for the church by the rich at which all members of the church, both rich and poor, shared food together as equals. Those who are described as ‘spots’ would over indulge in what was provided at the expense of others - 1Co 11:21 *For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of others; and one is hungry and another is drunk.*

g). These ‘spots’ are described this way in Php 3:18 *For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: 19 whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame--who set their mind on earthly things.*

h). If we now take this to a spiritual level, also within the historical context, we would see those who are ‘spots and blemishes’ as the same people that we find in – Ac 20:30 *"Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.*

i). In other words, they would be ‘feasting’ upon the word that was being taught but because ‘their god is their belly’, because they are ‘self serving’ and would want to teach ‘perverse things’, things contrary to scripture, they would take ‘the pure milk of the word’ and mix with it the ‘Nesquik’ of error producing for themselves and for those who would follow them a flavored milkshake of no nutritional value.

j). Their relationship to the proclamation of the word would parallel that of Israel with respect to Ezekiel as described in - Eze 33:30 ¶ *"As for you, son of man, the children of your people are talking about you beside the walls and in the doors of the houses; and they speak to one another, everyone saying to his brother, 'Please come and hear what the word is that comes from the LORD.' 31 "So they come to you as people do, they sit before you as My people, and they hear your words, but they do not do them; for with their mouth they show much love, but their hearts pursue their own gain. 32 "Indeed you are to them as a very lovely song of one who has a pleasant voice and can play well on an instrument; for they hear your words, but they do not do them.*

k). And a circumstance such as this does not just exist in the historical setting but would be true throughout this dispensation even to the present day.

5). V14 then continues - *14 having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin, enticing unstable souls. They have a heart trained in covetous practices, and are accursed children.*

a). ‘Having eyes full of adultery’ does not need to be understood in a literal sense, although in some instances this would be true, but rather to understand it in the figurative sense of continually entering into relationship with that which is other than Christ. If that which is taught is deliberately outside of the scriptural checks and balances then it isn’t from the Spirit, but from ‘the world’ – Jas 4:4 *Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.*

And in this the false teachers cannot cease, they are unable to stop from sin.

b). Not only do they enter into a spiritually adulterous relationship themselves, but they also entice ‘unstable souls’ to join in this adultery with them.

c). Enticing = Greek – ‘deleazo’, *del-eh-ad'-zo* = to catch by bait

d). Unstable = Greek – ‘asteriktos’, *as-tay'-rik-tos* = not anchored securely, not on a proper foundation

e). 2Ti 3:6 *For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts,*

f). Their heart attitude in this has been there for such a long time that ‘covetous practices’ has now become the norm for them and although they remain children of God, they are now because of their actions ‘accursed children’ – children who are under a divine curse.

6). 2Pe 2:15 *They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; 16 but he was rebuked for his iniquity: a dumb donkey speaking with a man's voice restrained the madness of the prophet.*

a). In the companion scripture to this in Jude we find that there are additional examples of apostasy added to that of Balaam - Jude 1:11 *Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah.*

b). What we see then is that there are three distinct examples of apostasy presented from the OT record which together provide the complete picture into which all apostasy will fit. Not that every apostate will be guilty of each of these, but every act of apostasy will be characterized within one of these examples.

c). And the examples that are given to us, as we can see are – ‘the way of Cain’, ‘the error of Balaam’ and ‘the rebellion of Korah’.

d). To be caught up in any one of these is to ‘have forsaken the right way and gone astray’. And for those who do so the statement is made in Jude, ‘Woe to them!’

e). Jer 6:16 *Thus says the LORD: "Stand in the ways and see, And ask for the old paths, where the good way is, And walk in it; Then you will find rest for your souls. But they said, 'We will not walk in it.' 17 Also, I set watchmen over you, saying, 'Listen to the sound of the trumpet!' But they said, 'We will not listen.'*

7). Let’s begin by looking at ‘the way of Cain’ – Throughout our study of 2 Peter we have seen that apostasy is a standing away from the faith. God has said one thing and those who stand away from the faith do not accept what God has said and therefore believe, and within our context in Peter, teach that which is contrary.

a). Faith is simply believing that which God has said and then acting accordingly – apostasy is simply not believing that which God has said and then acting accordingly.

b). The key verse we would find in scripture concerning faith is in Hebrews Chapter 11 - Heb 11:6 *But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*

c). And it is in this same Chapter of the Book of Hebrews that we find reference to Cain in relation to faith - Heb 11:4 ¶ *By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks.*

d). Both Abel and Cain offered a sacrifice to God, Abel's was accepted and Cain's was rejected. And in our scripture we see that Abel acted 'by faith' which makes it abundantly obvious that God had said exactly what He required from both Abel and Cain. Abel believed God and acted by faith and obtained witness that he was righteous and clearly Cain did not believe God and acted apart from faith which resulted in his rejection.

e). Now clearly both Cain and Abel knew God and would in our terminology be classified as eternally saved because it is not possible to act by faith or act apart from faith outside of that. Both brought sacrificial offerings in response to God's command to do so and to the casual observer both might appear to be godly, but as we have seen it is in the area of faith that the distinction is made. God will not accept anything except faithful obedience to that which He has said, there is no compromise.

f). And so what we will realize is that the way of Cain represents the way of the man of flesh, the way of the walking by sight and not by faith. Cain is the first and representative of, a long list of individuals in the OT who lived according to that which is recorded in - Pr 16:25 ¶ *There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.*

g). That which Cain and all those who follow in his way have failed to realize or have chosen to ignore is that man's thoughts ways are in contradistinction to those of God - Isa 55:8 *"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD. 9 "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.*

h). Man's perspective is finite and comes out of a fallen nature whereas God's perspective is infinite coming from a place where corruption cannot exist. God's ways and thoughts can only become His creation's ways and thoughts in the realm of faith, which is through His creation believing God and acting accordingly. Eternally redeemed man must follow the man of spirit in a walk by faith. There really is no other way - 2Co 5:7 *For we walk by faith, not by sight.*

i). Our compassionate and loving God has given to us His complete revelation to Man for the purpose of bringing unredeemed man in to right relationship with God and for redeemed man to be able to follow the man of spirit in a walk by faith within that right relationship.

j). But, in order to walk by faith we must know the revelation of God because we cannot believe God and then act accordingly without knowing what

God has said. Therefore the eternally redeemed Christian through the man of spirit, in conjunction with the work of the Holy Spirit, is made aware of the ways and thoughts of God through the scriptures which comprise His revelation to us, and as a result of this our pilgrim walk is governed accordingly - Heb 13:7 *Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct.*

k). If we do not receive God's revelation to us by not consistently engaging with the word after the proper fashion so that the Holy Spirit cannot guide us into all truth or if we follow a corrupted version of the word then inevitably we will walk in the way of Cain because we will not be able to do anything else.

l). We also need to realize in this that following the way of Cain, following the man of flesh is not necessarily something that would be offensive in the eyes of man. In fact within a religious context it would be quite the opposite, although it would not be called the way of Cain, but would rather have been disguised with the proper religious garments, couched in the proper religious terminology and then passed off within Christianity as the way and work of the Lord. Unfortunately, much of what is described as 'ministry' today in the Christian world is little more than following the plans and purposes of man as we help God out, rather than following God's plans and purposes as presented in the scriptures.

m). And just round off the picture we will remember that it is Cain, the man of the flesh, who kills Abel, the man of the spirit – And thus it will always be, just as assuredly as it was the Amalekite who took the crown from Saul's head.

n). Ga 5:17 *For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.*

o). Re 3:11 *"Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.*

8). And if the Lord is willing, next week we shall continue with 'the error of Balaam'.