

The 2nd Letter of Peter (Week 2)

In this chapter the Apostle Peter speaks of the sin and punishment of those who deliberately falsify the Gospel message. He uses the examples from the Old Testament scriptures to show that, while the judgement of the wicked may be delayed, in the eternal plan of the sovereign Lord God their condemnation is sure.

Read 2 Peter chapter 2, verses 1 – 22 – Warning against the perils of false teachers:-

Chapter 2, verses 1 – 3:-

Following on from the mention of prophets who spoke from God, Peter refers to the fact that in their time they too faced opposition. For example see Ezekiel chapter 13, verses 1 – 16. These false prophets claimed to speak with God's authority. The errors mentioned by Peter in this chapter appear to be those of life rather than doctrine. There are similar warnings in Acts chapter 20, verses 29 – 31; 1 Timothy chapter 4, verses 1 – 6 and 2 Timothy chapter 3, verses 1 – 9. The motive of the false teachers would be greed but judgement on them is certain.

Verses 4 – 9:-

Peter lists the examples of the wickedness of mankind at the time of Noah – Genesis chapter 6, verses 5 – 8. Noah and his family were kept safe although the world as it then was was destroyed. The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed because of their wickedness (Jude records that it was because of their immorality - Jude verse 7) and righteous Lot was rescued (Genesis 19 verse 29). So the righteous will be kept safe under the protection of the Lord God and judgement will be done on the wicked.

Verses 10 – 16:-

Peter warns against rash and self-confident speech even when referring to spiritual things. One of the characteristics of modern 'liberal' teachers in their absolute confidence in their own conclusions. The evidence produced is often flimsy and unprovable but they insist on tremendously important departures from ancient practices maintained for centuries by the historic church.

Unfortunately there have been cases where apparent desire for popularity and financial remuneration have led to the falling away of respected Christian leaders.

Verses 17 – 22:-

Note the graphic description of spiritual dryness. "*Wells without water and clouds bringing no rain*" (verse 17). The basic condemnation of false doctrine is its spiritual barrenness. The promise is one of freedom, the outcome is slavery. Any kind of 'addiction' to "*defilements of the world*" (verse 20) is slavery of the spirit to sin. If we have committed our life to the Lord Jesus Christ then we are called to a life of holiness. We are called to *abstain from the passions of the flesh that wage war against your soul*" - see 1 Peter chapter 2, verse 1).

The whole of this chapter is a warning against pride (it was regarded as one of the Seven Deadly Sins along with Greed, Wrath, Envy, Lust, Gluttony and Sloth). Now it is seen by many as being on the 'right side of history'. In our dealings with others we need to remember that "*Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is a child of God*". Maybe the words of Paul's Second Letter to Timothy are appropriate – read chapter 4, verses 1 – 5. We pray for the Holy Spirit to inspire faithful church leaders who will have the courage to speak the God's Word in meetings where decisions are to be made.