

2 PETER – PASSING ON THE TRADITION

CHAPTER 2 – STANDING AGAINST HERESY



A DIFFICULT LITTLE LETTER

- One of the most controversial letters in the NT
- Both the content & historical context have raised many questions
- Greek very different to I Peter
- Not quoted until 3rd Century AD
- Debate about authorship
- One of the last books accepted into the canon
- Chapter 2 very similar to Jude – who copied who?
- References to Jewish legends
- Speaking of Paul's letters as if they are already recognised as Scripture

THE AUTHOR

- Two basic ideas about how it was written:
- Directly by Peter
 - Whilst in prison in Rome – shortly before he was martyred
 - Around 64-68 AD
- Indirectly by Peter
 - By a disciple after his death – using Peter's words & ideas
 - Unknown date, possibly after 90's AD



THE AUDIENCE



- Written to the same Churches as I Peter
 - In Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, & Bithynia
- Churches facing persecution from outside
- Churches facing heresy from inside
- Mostly Gentile Christians – but who are familiar with Jewish writings & legends

THE SOURCE & FRUIT OF TRUTH

- The letter highlights the source of the truth – what was revealed in Christ & seen by the Apostles & handed on to the Church
- It contrasts this with the source of the heresy – what is “revealed” in Jewish myths, legends, and false writings
- The letter focuses on the fruit of the truth – holiness & Godly lives
- It contrasts this with fruit of the heresy – immoral lives & rebelling against authority

THE SOURCE & FRUIT OF TRUTH

- Makes this a very relevant letter for today, as culture wrestles with the question “what is truth?”
- As we talk about “alternative facts” or “post truth”.
- 2 Peter points us to look at the source and the fruit of truth.
 - Where did it come from?
 - What is its fruit?

PASSING ON TRADITION & LIVING GODLY LIVES

- Chapter 1: Passing on Tradition – from the Apostles
 - Living Godly Lives
- Chapter 2: Standing against Heresy – from the False Teachers
 - Living Ungodly Lives
- Chapter 3: Waiting for Judgment – from God
 - Living Godly Lives

THE FALSE TEACHERS

- Chapter 2 focuses on the false teachers who are leading the Churches astray
- Rather than look at what they are actually teaching, Peter instead looks at their character
 - What are their lives teaching?
 - How are they encouraging people to live?
- He also looks at where they are heading, and what are the consequences of those who follow their path

THE FALSE TEACHERS

- After Malachi, many other writings & myths arose in Judaism
 - Trying to explain the story behind the OT
 - Adding to the Biblical story
- They became a part of Jewish thinking and so were a part of the worldview of the first Christians
 - Example Paul speaks of Angels giving the Law to Moses
- Highly likely that Jewish Christians then passed these ideas on to Gentile Christians
- The False Teachers then based their heresies on these myths & legends
 - Adding to the truth revealed in Scripture & in Jesus

2 PETER & JUDE

- Both letters face this problem
- Jude actually uses these myths against the False Teachers
- He quotes books like I Enoch & The Assumption of Moses
 - Uses their own “ammunition”
- Proves their falseness by using their own “books”!
- 2 Peter is similar (if less direct quotes)
- Main point of both is the same
 - Their sinful lives prove them false
 - God has always judged these type of sins
 - He will judge them again
 - Don't listen to them
 - Don't follow them
 - They will lead you away from Christ

FALSE TEACHERS AMONG YOU (1-3)

- Chapter begins with “but” – this in contrast to the Apostle’s teaching & lifestyle
- There are False teachers among you – bringing destructive heresies
- Exploiting you for gain
- Leading you astray
- Blaspheming the truth
- Denying Christ
- Their condemnation & destruction is coming

GOD'S PAST JUDGMENT (4-10)

- God has always judged people like this
 1. Sinful Angels & the ancient world of Noah
 2. Sodom & Gomorrah
- Peter uses examples from Genesis & Jewish writings (1 Enoch & Jubilees)
- Both these examples are about those who were morally corrupt & who despised authority
- But in both cases God also rescued the righteous from that judgment
 1. Noah & his family
 2. Lot & his family
- God is aware of both the righteous & the unrighteous
- He will rescue the righteous & punish the unrighteous

FALSE TEACHERS ARE THE SAME (10-16)

- They are bold & wilful
- Blaspheme the glorious ones
- Irrational animals
- Creatures of instinct
- Blaspheme matters of which they are ignorant
- Revel in the daytime
- Revelling in their deceptions
- Eyes full of adultery
- Insatiable for sin
- Entice unsteady souls
- Hearts trained in greed
- Follow the way of Balaam

SLAVES CANNOT SET YOU FREE (17-22)

- Waterless springs who entice by the flesh
- They promise freedom but are slaves
- They once escaped through the knowledge of Christ – but have returned to slavery
- Their second slavery is worse than the first
- Better for them if they had never known righteousness
- “The dog returns to its own vomit, and the sow, after washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire”



APPLICATION

- The main application of chapter 2 is actually chapter 1 & 3
- Holding on to the truth that has been passed down to us & living Godly lives
 - The source of the truth is Jesus & the fruit of the truth is holiness
- Chapter 2 is the counterfeit to that truth
- Peter is urging these Churches to hold on to the truth, to know it so well that the counterfeit would be obvious to them

APPLICATION

- But he is also being realistic – not all False Teachers are obvious from their teaching
 - So what is their fruit?
- The teaching may seem sound – but what is the lifestyle of the one who teaches it?
- What do they entice others to do?
- Where do they lead people? – Are they leading them into holiness?

APPLICATION

- Far more challenging aspect to this
- 17-22 shows that there were once free in Christ, they knew him, they knew the way of righteousness
- What happened?
- Wake up one day “I’m going to be a False Teacher!”
- Probably never intended to do this
- Must have made choices that led them down that path, choices that led them away from Jesus
- That’s scary!
- How do we stop ourselves walking down that path?

APPLICATION

- Back to the main point
- Always check against the truth that has been handed down to us
 - The Bible
 - Church teaching, doctrine, theology, tradition
- Know the genuine to recognise the counterfeit – even in yourself



How's my lifestyle...
Holy?...

