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Destruction Is Not Asleep

2 PETER 2:1-10

Introduction

1. Does it matter what we believe?
2. Yes, because only the truth can set us free.
3. Does it matter what we teach?
4. Again, yes, because the eternal destiny of souls are at stake.
5. God's desire is that we might all be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4).
6. As Peter pointed out in the beginning of this letter, God's divine power has granted us everything we need to live godly lives (v. 3).
7. He has "granted to us His precious and magnificent promises," so that you and I may "become partakers of the divine nature" (v. 4).
8. He has even sent the Holy Spirit to move men so that they spoke His words (v. 21).
9. However, Satan, "the father of lies" (John 8:44) continues to work night and day to mislead you and me.
10. For this reason, it is vital that we strive to identify and follow the truth and those who teach it.
11. In our text this morning, Peter addresses a subject that though unpleasant is still necessary — false teachers, the effect of their teaching and how God promises to respond to them.

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I. We Are Not Immune To False Teachers

A. THEY HAVE ALWAYS BEEN, THEY WILL ALWAYS BE

“But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you . . . ” (2 Peter 2:1a, NASB95)

1. Through Moses God commanded that any prophet who spoke “a word presumptuously in [His] name” was to be put to death (Deuteronomy 18:20).
2. The prophet Jeremiah spoke of them in the days before Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians and said “from the prophet even to the priest everyone deals falsely.” (Jeremiah 6:13, NASB95)
3. Jesus told His disciples that “false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect” (Matthew 24:24).
4. In 2 Corinthians 11:15, Paul wrote of those servants of Satan who “disguise themselves as servants of righteousness.”
5. Now, some thirty years after the beginning of the church, Peter is warning his readers that they are still a reality.

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B. WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THESE FALSE TEACHERS?

“But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; and in their greed they will exploit you with false words . . . ” (2 Peter 2:1–3, NASB95)

1. They “secretly introduce destructive heresies” (1b).
 - a. They slip these “destructive heresies” in alongside the true teaching of the apostles.

- b. These teachings are destructive in that they lead those who follow them to destruction (i.e. hell).

3a

- 2. They deny “the Master who bought them” (v. 1c).
 - a. Paul told the Christians in Corinth, “you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body” (1 Corinthians 6:19).
 - b. In his last letter, Peter wrote “you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ” (1 Peter 1:18-19).
 - c. These false teachers deny their Master in that they do not live holy lives which reflect His presence within them.
 - d. Jesus said it is inconsistent for us to call Him Lord and yet not do what He says (Luke 6:46).

3b

- 3. They “bring swift destruction upon themselves” (v. 1d)
 - a. Because their teaching is destructive to others,
 - b. So destruction is coming upon them.

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- 4. Many will follow their sensuality (v. 2).
 - a. Their students are emulating their shameful ways (“sensuality”).
 - b. Paul exhorted the brethren in Rome to a godly lifestyle: “Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy.” (Romans 13:13, NASB95)
 - c. In his first letter, Peter had reminded these Christians, “For the time already past is sufficient for you to have carried out the desire of the

Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties and abominable idolatries.” (1 Peter 4:3, NASB95)

4a

5. They bring dishonor to the “way of truth” (v. 2b).
 - a. The way we live our lives reflects on the truth we profess.
 - b. In his letter to the church at Rome, the apostle Paul asked a series of questions which focused on their lifestyle and the way others perceived the truth.

“You who preach that one shall not steal, do you steal? You who say that one should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery?” (Romans 2:21b–22a, NASB95)

“For “the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you,” just as it is written.” (Romans 2:24, NASB95)

4b

6. They exploit the church out of greed (v. 3a).
 - a. They do this with “false words” designed to fleece their hearers instead of help them.
 - b. They were like the false teachers of whom Paul warned in 1 Timothy 6:5, men who thought Christianity could be a source of financial gain for themselves.

Slide 5**C. THEIR JUDGMENT**

“... their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.” (2 Peter 2:3b, NASB95)

1. Long ago, God spoke through Moses and said,
“Is it not laid up in store with Me,
Sealed up in My treasuries?”

'Vengeance is Mine, and retribution,
In due time their foot will slip;
For the day of their calamity is near,
And the impending things are hastening upon them.'"

(Deuteronomy 32:34–35, NASB95)

2. Not only has God been planing the destruction of such individuals, His justice does not sleep and it is never late.

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II. Examples From The Past

A. FALLEN ANGELS

"For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment;" (2 Peter 2:4, NASB95)

1. Someone might ask, "Peter, how do I know what you are saying about God's judgment is true?"
2. In these verses (4-6), Peter gives us three examples of God's impartial judgment and the certainty that it will come.
3. His first example is of the angels who rebelled against God.
4. As a result, God cast them into the place of torment where they are awaiting final judgment.
5. Jude also speaks of their transgression and punishment (Jude 6).

"And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day," (Jude 6, NASB95)

6. Peter's point: These are already in prison. How much more sure is the judgment of those who have denied the Lord who purchased them?

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B. THE FLOOD

“and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly;” (2 Peter 2:5, NASB95)

1. In Genesis 6:5, Moses wrote of God’s assessment of the ancient world, prior to the flood.

“Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Genesis 6:5, NASB95).

2. These were people who had no time whatever for God though Noah attempted to persuade them to change their ways.
3. As a result, God destroyed the world as Noah and his family had known it, but saved them.
4. Again Peter reinforces the certainty of God’s judgment.
5. Peter’s point is that our God can and will destroy the ungodly no matter how many and still preserve the righteous from among them.

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C. THE CITIES OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH

“and if He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly lives thereafter;” (2 Peter 2:6, NASB95)

1. The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah takes us back to Genesis 19 where God destroyed the two cities by raining down “brimstone and fire” from “heaven” (v. 24).
2. According to Peter, God reduced them “to ashes” thus “making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly” (v. 6).
3. This total destruction was allowed by God in order to make it plain to succeeding generations that ungodly lives will end in ruin.

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III. What This Means For Us Today

A. "THE LORD KNOWS HOW TO RESCUE THE GODLY FROM TEMPTATION"

"If He [God] rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men (for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day by their lawless deeds), then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation" (2 Peter 2:7-9a, NASB95)

1. Three times, Peter uses the word "righteous" in his description of Lot.
 2. The "sensual conduct of [the] unprincipled men" which Lot "saw and heard . . . while living among them" tormented "his righteous soul . . . day after day."
 3. Through God's removal of Lot from that city and destruction of it, He rescued His servant.
 4. Just as God spared Noah and his family from the effects of the Flood and rescued Lot and his daughters from the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, so He is able to deliver those of us who seek to live godly lives in today's world.
2. As the hymn written almost 150 years ago by William Ogden declares,

He is able to deliver thee,
He is able to deliver thee:
Though by sin oppressed, go to Him for rest;
Our God is able to deliver thee.

William A. Ogden (1887)

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B. "THE LORD KNOWS HOW TO KEEP THE UNRIGHTEOUS UNDER PUNISHMENT FOR THE DAY OF JUDGMENT"

1. There is no escaping the watchful eye of the Lord.
2. As Solomon wrote in Proverbs 15:3, "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, watching the evil and the good" (Proverbs 15:3, NASB95).

3. And as Abraham said to the Lord prior to His judgment upon Sodom and Gomorrah, “Shall not the judge of all the earth do what is just?” (Genesis 18:25, ESV).

Conclusion

1. These examples of Noah and Lot, which Peter has provided, show us how God delivers the righteous from trials in their lives.
2. Neither man had immediate deliverance:
 - a. Noah continued for years in the wicked environment he found himself building an ark in obedience to God’s instructions.
 - b. Lot also had to endure long years questioning why he ever decided to go and live in Sodom.
3. However, at the time of His choosing, God delivered them both.
4. God may allow us to spend long years of waiting before He intervenes.
5. He may even use us to help ourselves out of our difficulties.
6. Wherever we find ourselves in all of this, we must not forget that God knows how to deliver the godly.
7. We can rely on Him.