

Lesson Nine — The Warning Against False Teachers

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Last week we completed II Peter chapter one. Chapter one clearly lays the foundation for the growth of a Christian, a growth that is necessary if one is to become mature. But there will surely be pitfalls along the way as a Christian grows from immaturity to maturity. And after Peter lays the foundation for growth, he warns about those pitfalls. Perhaps the greatest, most deadly pitfall is the work of false teachers. Time and time again Satan has successfully used this mode of operation to cause the cessation of growth among Christians. Though his work is rampant among the Church today, he has been active in this area, since the early church fell from their first love (Rev. 2:2-7). During and following this falling from their first love, the enemy brought about severe persecution of Christians through the Roman Empire, apparently hoping that it would diminish the zeal of believers. Instead this persecution caused many to be strengthened (Rev. 2:8-11). In addition to the persecution which was coming from outside of the Church, Satan sought to bring destruction from within the Church by raising up false teachers from among them (Christians who would teach falsely concerning things having to do with the prophetic Word of the Coming Kingdom of Christ [II Peter 1:16-2:2])...teachers who would lead them away from the plan and purpose of God, and cause them to be more concerned about the things of the world (Rev. 2:12-17; *c.f.* Mt. 13:24ff). By using both tactics, within and without the Church, the enemy had great success, to the point of bringing about spiritual adultery within the church (Rev. 2:19-27), until finally the church became so weak that it appeared nearly dead (Rev. 3:1-6). And even though there could be found a remnant of people holding fast to the Word (Rev. 3:7-13), the church is fast becoming so lukewarm today that it sickens the stomach of the Lord Jesus Christ, that He will spew them out of His mouth (Rev. 3:14-21). These are tough but true words.

And while the so-called fundamentalists in the Church today teach the virgin birth, the blood atonement, the free gift extended to sinners through faith, etc., etc., they not only miss the central focus of Scripture — the reason for our redemption, they oft times will fight against anyone who wishes to teach it.

In these next few weeks we will look into the work of the false teachers and see what it is they seek to destroy. Please pray for clarity of mind, and sensitivity of heart. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you into all truth, so that the Lord can impart to you His wisdom regarding these matters. In these next two weeks of study, you may feel like you are juggling several balls in the air, and wonder where this is all going. Just hang in there, and I believe that at the end of the next week's homework and lecture, it will all come together for you. **(You may have to ask the Lord to give you patience as you work through this.)**

Day One — II Peter, Jude and Apostasy

Begin today with prayer. Pray for yourself and the others in your group. Pray that God would give all of you the mind of Christ as you seek Him. Ask to be led into truth. Ask that your mind be opened to understand Scripture. And please pray for me and for my family, too.

Today we are only going to become more familiar with chapter two. Since II Peter and Jude are companion epistles, we will also become more familiar with Jude (printed in your Appendix).

Again, since all Scripture is found within a greater context, we will read the final passage of chapter one, (from v. 15 ff) then read through chapter two several times. (Sometimes the chapter breaks mess up of the flow of things.) Read that now.

Any comments?

Now read Jude. List some of the similarities you see in these two chapters?

That is all we will do today. As you close today, ask the Lord to allow you to meditate on these passages throughout your day, and to bring to your mind what He wants you to understand here.

Day Two — The Prophetic Word Made More Sure

Begin in prayer.

Yesterday you observed II Peter chapter two and the epistle of Jude. Today we will begin at the end of chapter one because here is where Peter tells us what facet of Scripture false teachers will malign.

II Peter 1:19-2:3

19 And so we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. **20** But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, **21** for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God. **2:1** 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. **2** And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; **3** and in their greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.

Did you catch what facet of Scripture was maligned by *false prophets*; and what facet is maligned by *false teachers*? If so, what is it?

Did you see it, or did you miss it? There are two key words in v. 19. Yes, it is the **prophetic word**. And what does the prophetic word have to do with? *Check the context*. It has to do with the coming Kingdom.

Last week, both in the workbook and in the lecture, we learned of the experience Peter had on the Mount of Transfiguration. We learned about what Jesus spoke *preceding* this event when He spoke of the cost of discipleship, the saving of the soul, judgment, and His coming in glory with recompense (Mt. 16:24-27). We learned that Christ was transfigured six days later, on the seventh day, in kingdom glory. We learned what the Father said when He spoke audibly from heaven saying, ***"This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased"*** (Mt. 17:1-5). All of this points to this present journey each Christian is on, our willingness to pay the cost of discipleship or lack thereof, our future judgment based upon that willingness, and the coming kingdom, with a just recompense being meted out.

And *this prophetic word* — the Word which Peter had gleaned from the Old Testament, *was made more sure* in the sense of making *more clear*, due to his eyewitness of Christ in His Kingdom glory, which *we would do well to pay attention as to a light shining in the darkness*, which false teachers malign, as the false prophets did also. And these false teachers will rise up from among God's people, just as the false prophets rose up from among God's people in the Old Testament. They *will not be* outsiders who cry of a different gospel. — false prophets and false teachers do not malign the way of salvation. Rather it is a cry of teachers *from among God's people* (check the text) who malign *prophecy concerning the literal coming kingdom*.

Whew! My heart literally pounds as I write these words.

"Oh Father! Let us do well in paying attention to this light shining in a dark place — the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ. May the light grow in intensity within our hearts, as the darkness surrounding us grows in intensity. May we, each one, be found faithful unto the end, holding fast the hope You have set before us! Amen."

Please understand that the panorama of prophecy is not for you or me or anyone to interpret according to our heart's desire. Prophecy must be interpreted through other Scriptures. It all must paint the same picture. Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Zechariah, Hosea, on and on. Then add Peter, James, John, and Paul...they all speak of the same things, pointing to the same facts. Whether it is expressed in words written, or pictured in types and anti-types, or told in parables, you get the same picture throughout Scripture. All the writers of Scripture wrote Words that were literally given to them by God — Words breathed out by God through His Holy Spirit, coming to us through the pens of the men who were raised up by God to give us this Word. Actually, the picture couldn't be made clearer than what it is. And

Peter's eyewitness account makes the Word even more clear. It is the Word made more sure!!! And we would do well to pay very close attention to what the Scriptures say about prophecy.

For the remainder of your study time today, I would like to ask you to do something that may seem a bit strange, but let's just give it a try. From any of the authors of Scripture mentioned in the above paragraph or from any other portion of Scripture, would you randomly go to any of them in your Bible, and read three chapters. It could be three chapters from the same author (i.e. all from Isaiah, or all from Jeremiah, etc., etc.), or it could be one chapter from three different authors, but do be random about choosing the three chapters. Then in the space below, write down the reference of each chapter and any details you find which have to do with this prophetic word. Be sure to note any references as to the time frame, the location, and of whom the prophecy concerns. If you have found a chapter in which you do not see anything of prophecy in it, fine. Just make a note of it. Then when you meet for your class discussion, would you share a few of the things that you have found, and listen to what others have found? It might be interesting to see just how varied, yet specific God is about this prophetic word.

Details from my three chapters:

See you tomorrow.

Day Three — The Destructive Heresies of False Prophets/Teachers

For the remainder of this week, we are going to spend a good amount of time on pure observation. At first glance, II Peter chapter two seems to be filled with difficult-to-understand things, which need much observation. So be sure to begin with prayer.

As mentioned before, the epistle of II Peter is companion to the epistle of Jude. Today and tomorrow you will see a break down of those comparisons.

II Peter begins at the same point Jude begins — dealing with the common faith (II Peter), or common salvation (Jude) — then tells what we are to do with that faith. Read the first few verses in II Peter chapter one and compare it with Jude 1: 3.

II Peter 1

1 Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ...

... 5 Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply...

... 8 For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

...10 Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent...

...12 Therefore, I shall always be ready to remind you of these things...

Jude 1

3 Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.

What comparisons do you see? In both epistles, what are we to do with our common faith?

We will continue to work through these two companion epistles and make comparisons. Compare II Peter 2:1-3 with Jude 1:4:

II Peter 2

1 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. 2 And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; 3 and in

their greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.

Jude 1

4 For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

What comparisons do you see? What do the false teachers do?

From the text, can you tell whether or not the false teachers being dealt with in II Peter chapter two *are saved*? If so, how?

What can we know about their judgment?

Now compare II Peter 2: 4-9 with Jude 1: 5-7:

II Peter 2

3(b)... their [the false teachers'] judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep. 4 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; 5 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; 6 and if He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by them to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly thereafter;

Jude 1

5 Now I desire to remind you, though you know all things once for all, that the Lord, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe. 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. 7 Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example, in undergoing the punishment of eternal <166> fire.

What comparisons do you see? What examples of judgment are given here?

Optional work: Before you close your study time for today, would you summarize the progression found in today's lesson? (This will be a good study tool for you to do this, and then you will be able to draw from this as you begin your study tomorrow.)

Day Four — Various Descriptions of False Prophets/Teachers

Continue the same work today as you did yesterday. Begin with prayer, and then read yesterday's summary at the end of the day's work.

With the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah having just been given as an example of the punishment *to those who would live ungodly thereafter*, Peter writes a bit about Lot. Read what he says:

Continuing...

II Peter 2

7 and if He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men 8 (for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day with their lawless deeds), 9 then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment, 10 and especially those who indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires and despise authority.

The story of Lot is an interesting one. Some years back, Lot might have had a chance to move away from these two cities, but evidently chose not to. That time was when his uncle Abram had set the cities free which had been captured by some neighboring kings (Gen. 14). The morals of the city had degenerated to an extremely low point. However, it seems at this point in his life, Lot was striving to live righteously, and that amidst a people who were becoming more decadent by the day. Hence, Lot's soul was being tormented day after day, because he remained in Sodom living among that wickedness, though obviously not participating in the same conduct himself. And the Lord rescued him out of the cities. With that in mind, what would you think vv. 9-10 mean?

Now compare II Peter 2:10-14 with Jude 8, 9:

II Peter 2 [speaking of false teachers]

10(b) Daring, self-willed, they do not tremble when they revile angelic majesties, 11 whereas angels who are greater in might and power do not bring a reviling judgment against them before the Lord. 12 But these, like unreasoning animals, born as creatures of instinct to be captured and killed, reviling where they have no knowledge, will in the destruction of those creatures also be destroyed, 13 suffering wrong as the wages of doing wrong. They count it a pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are stains and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, as they carouse with you, 14 having eyes full of adultery and that never cease from sin, enticing unstable souls, having a heart trained in greed, accursed children...

Jude 1

8 Yet in the same manner these men, also by dreaming, defile the flesh, and reject authority, and revile angelic majesties. 9 But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you."

Write in your own words the descriptions given here of the false teachers. (As much as we may not like these descriptions, remember these are God's Words and His view of the matter.)

Some of this could also be compared to what we read in Jeremiah chapter twenty-three, wherein the prophets committed (spiritual) adultery by walking in falsehood (Jer. 23:14), and moved people away from God by telling people of the dreams they had had (23:25-28).

Any comment?

Now compare II Peter 2:15, 16 with Jude 1: 10, 11:

II Peter 2

...accursed children; 15 forsaking the right way they have gone astray, having followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness, 16 but he received

a rebuke for his own transgression; for a dumb donkey, speaking with a voice of a man, restrained the madness of the prophet.

Jude 1

10 But these men revile the things which they do not understand; and the things which they know by instinct, like unreasoning animals, by these things they are destroyed. 11 Woe to them! For they have gone the way of Cain, and for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam, and perished in the rebellion of Korah.

What comparisons do you see?

In reference to the false prophets/teachers *forsaking the right way* and having *gone astray* (II Pe. 2:15), Jeremiah has something to say about *the paths*, or the way which God would have you go. Let's read a flow of thoughts, which God gave to Jeremiah. Watch the progression:

Jeremiah 5

30 "An appalling and horrible thing Has happened in the land: 31 The prophets prophesy falsely, And the priests rule on their [own] authority; And My people love it so! But what will you do at the end of it?

Jeremiah 6 (Especially note v. 16.)

13 "For from the least of them even to the greatest of them, Everyone is greedy for gain, And from the prophet even to the priest Everyone deals falsely. 14" And they have healed the brokenness of My people superficially, Saying, 'Peace, peace,' But there is no peace. 15 Were they ashamed because of the abomination they have done? They were not even ashamed at all; They did not even know how to blush. Therefore they shall fall among those who fall; At the time that I punish them, They shall be cast down," says the LORD. 16 Thus says the LORD, "Stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths, Where the good way is, and walk in it; And you shall find rest for your souls. But they said, 'We will not walk in it.'

Jeremiah 7 (Especially note v. 23.)

23 "But this is what I commanded them, saying, 'Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you will be My people; and you will walk in all the way which I command you, that it may be well with you.' 24 Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but walked in their own counsels and in the stubbornness of their evil heart, and went backward and not forward. 25 Since the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt until this day, I have sent you all My servants the prophets, daily rising early and sending them. 26 Yet they did not listen to Me or incline their ear, but stiffened their neck; they did evil more than their fathers. 27 And you shall speak all these words to them, but they will not listen to you; and you shall call to them, but they will not answer you.

Jeremiah 18

15 'For My people have forgotten Me, They burn incense to worthless gods And they have stumbled from their ways, From the ancient paths, To walk in bypaths, Not on a highway

What progression do you note throughout these verses?

Now read what the Lord gave the Apostle John to write about the Laodicean Church, the characteristics of which represent the Church at the end of the dispensation:

Revelation 3

14 “And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this:

15 ‘I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I would that you were cold or hot. 16 ‘So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth. 17 Because you say, “I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,” and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, 18 I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire, that you may become rich, and white garments, that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes, that you may see. 19 Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; be zealous therefore, and repent. 20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me. 21 He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. 22 ‘He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’”

Can you see the similarities in the result of the work of the false prophets and the false teachers?

We’ll continue tomorrow.

Day Five — More Descriptions and What the False Teachers Mock

We’ll pick up from yesterday. Begin in prayer.

Compare II Peter 2:17, 18 with Jude 1: 12, 13, 16:

II Peter 2

17 These are springs without water, and mists driven by a storm, for whom the black darkness has been reserved. 18 For speaking out arrogant words of vanity they entice by fleshly desires, by sensuality, those who barely escape from the ones who live in error, 19

promising them freedom while they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved.

Jude 1

12 These men are those who are hidden reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted; **13** wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam; wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever <165>. **14** And about these also Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, “Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones, **15** to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.” **16** These are grumblers, finding fault, following after their own lusts; they speak arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of gaining an advantage.

What comparisons do you see? Continue the description of false teachers. What do they do? What will happen to them?

And here are the final comments from the pen of Peter at the end of chapter two:

II Peter 2

20 For if after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. **21** For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment delivered to them. **22** It has happened to them according to the true proverb, “A DOG RETURNS TO ITS OWN VOMIT,” and, “A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire.”

All the pronouns *they* and *them* in this passage refer to the false teachers. The word for *knowledge* in v. 20 is *epignosis*. How is it that these people had come into an epignosis of God’s Word? Do you remember what kind of ministry had been done in this region? Remember Paul had not shirked giving them the *whole counsel of God’s Word* — the gospel of grace and the Word of the Kingdom (Acts 20:24-27). They had been well taught, *having once escaped the defilements of the world*, they had come *to know the way of righteousness*. But, as Peter points out, these false teachers (who will rise from among them), *will again be entangled in the world, will turn away from the holy commandment which had been delivered to them, and will be overcome*, rather than overcome. Peter then gives a sickening description of them — a description breathed by the Holy Spirit as the way God views false teachers — *a dog returning to his own vomit*, and as a pig, *after being washed, returning to his mire to wallow in it*.

All in all, this is a very sad commentary. And a commentary not given by man which would be subject to our scrutiny, but one given by God, which shuts our mouths to any objections concerning it. These false teachers are saved, having been bought by the Master (II Pet. 2:1). God views Christians, who have come into the epignosis of the Lord Jesus Christ and fallen away from it, and who call upon others to fall away from it as well, in a whole different light than what we might want to.

Think about that for a while.

In closing, we will glimpse the first half of II Peter chapter three, but will only be touching on it as we complete our comparisons between II Peter and Jude. We will cover II Peter chapter three in more depth in the next couple of weeks.

Compare II Peter 3:1-13 with Jude 1: 17-19:

II Peter 3

1 This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you in which I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, **2** that you should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles.

3 Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, **4** and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.” **5** For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water, **6** through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water. **7** But the present heavens and earth by His word are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. **8** But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

9 The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. **10** But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.

11 Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, **12** looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, on account of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! **13** But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

Jude 1

17 But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, **18** that they were saying to you, “In the last time there shall be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts.” **19** These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit.

What comparisons do you see?

That’s it for the week. I know you must have many questions about this week’s study, but do not be discouraged, we’ll take another week on this chapter. Hopefully with another week’s study and two lectures on this chapter, you will be able to view it more clearly.

By the way, you must be doing a great job of hanging in there! It takes great discipline to study God’s Word the way you have been for the past nine weeks. Good for you! May you be blessed! And may you stand firm.