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The Second Epistle of Peter

Wising Up to Evil (Part 2)

October 8, 2017

Sermon Text: 2 Peter 2:4-22

Scripture Reading: Numbers 22

The flood of Noah's day is a HUGE event and theme in Scripture. Huge.

By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith. (Hebrews 11:7)

The flood is referred to over and over again in the New Testament and we have it here in both chapters 2 and 3 of this epistle. The fact that God destroyed the world and everyone in it

except Noah and his family instructs us today about the coming Day of the Lord and God's faithful provision and preservation of His people through it.

And yet, how many people in this world today are living their lives each day with this in mind? There is no fear of God in them, it would seem.

As Peter warns us about the creeps who creep in among us, the false teachers who will most certainly put on "holy" disguise and come into the church to lead us away from Christ, one of the planks in their "theology" is that God need not be feared by anyone. All this talk, they will say, about judgment and hell and Christ's return is just a bunch of nonsense.

2 Peter 3:3-6 knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. (4) They will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were

from the beginning of creation." (5) For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, (6) and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished.

In so doing, they deny the Master who bought them:

Matthew 25:31-32 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. (32) Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.

These are, then incredibly evil and wicked individuals who we can absolutely expect to meet up with in the local church. It is certain. As we saw last time, these are not pagans bringing in some Baal as an idol god. No. They are people who claim to be Christians, who claim to know Christ better than we do and who appear as "sons of righteousness."

These people are the reason that many, many people who grew up in a church want nothing to do with church or Christ ever again. Or who

left following Christ because they were taught that God is no one to be feared.

Follow along now as we read from verse 4 through the end of the chapter and let's see what else Peter has to tell us about these enemies:

2 Peter 2:4-22 For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment;

(5) if he did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly;

(6) if by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes he condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly;

(7) and if he rescued righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked (8) (for as that righteous man lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard);

(9) then the Lord knows how to rescue

the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment,

(10) and especially those who indulge in the lust of defiling passion and despise authority. Bold and willful, they do not tremble as they blaspheme the glorious ones, (11) whereas angels, though greater in might and power, do not pronounce a blasphemous judgment against them before the Lord.

(12) But these, like irrational animals, creatures of instinct, born to be caught and destroyed, blaspheming about matters of which they are ignorant, will also be destroyed in their destruction, (13) suffering wrong as the wage for their wrongdoing. They count it pleasure to revel in the daytime.

They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, while they feast with you. (14) They have eyes full of adultery, insatiable for sin. They entice unsteady souls. They have hearts trained in greed. Accursed children!

(15) Forsaking the right way, they have gone astray. They have followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved gain from wrongdoing, (16) but was rebuked for his own transgression; a speechless donkey

spoke with human voice and restrained the prophet's madness.

(17) These are waterless springs and mists driven by a storm. For them the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved. (18) For, speaking loud boasts of folly, they entice by sensual passions of the flesh those who are barely escaping from those who live in error. (19) They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption. For whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved.

(20) For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. (21) For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them. (22) What the true proverb says has happened to them: "The dog returns to its own vomit, and the sow, after washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire."

Do you want to know how much flagrant unbelief there is in the church regarding God's Word? Well, just describe one of these false teachers in

the terms Peter uses here and see what reaction you get.

Alright then, let's go back to verses 4-9 and take a closer look. These verses are given to support Peter's statement in verse 3 about the certain coming judgment of the false teachers:

2 Peter 2:3 And in their greed they will exploit you with false words. **Their condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.**

The theme or "punch line" is at the end, in verse 9 –

2 Peter 2:9 then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment,

And the "if" premises appear first in verses 4-7:

(4) For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment;

(5) if he did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when

he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly;

(6) if by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes he condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly;

(7) and if he rescued righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked (8) (for as that righteous man lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard);

...then the Lord knows how.... You see?

Don't be duped by them! All who follow them will go down with them on that Day. Many people will fall for their sensual, fleshly message. Don't you do it! Hang in there and stick firmly to Christ. You will have trials, but the Lord knows how to preserve us and rescue His people. He also knows how to keep the wicked in prison until the Day of Judgment.

- The wicked angels
- The wicked of Noah's day
- The ungodly in Sodom and Gomorrah

AND He preserves the righteous until then:

- Noah and his family
- Righteous Lot and his family (less his wife)

Following Christ is hard. And then along comes this new, charismatic “holy” person with an exciting new message. *You can follow Christ and not suffer. You can enjoy yourself now! You can be popular with everyone. God is gracious and loving and merciful. This judgment day business is nonsense.*

Peter brings us right back to reality. He points us to several historic events from the biblical record that prove to us that God is indeed going to judge the world one day and all the wicked will perish in hell. Sodom and Gomorrah is a visible picture of it. The flood in Noah’s day is a picture of it. *Even the demons know that day is coming for them.*

Matthew 8:28-29 And when he came to the other side, to the country of the Gadarenes, two demon-possessed men met him, coming out of the tombs, so fierce that no one could pass that way. (29) And behold, they cried out, "What have you to do with us, O Son of God? **Have you come here to**

torment us before the time?"

Now, let’s do some hard work here and bring this all to bear upon what is going on in churches right now in our own day. To do so, let’s review verses 1-3 again:

2 Peter 2:1-3 But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. (2) And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed. (3) And in their greed they will exploit you with false words. Their condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.

Rehearse again now with me the traits of these enemy agents:

- They are “prophets.” They claim to be teachers and speaking for God,
- They operate secretly and in disguise
- They endanger souls and deny what Christ said and did,
- Their message tempts the flesh, it is a sensual, indulging message

- They are motivated by greed
- They use and exploit people for their own selfish ends. They are liars.

But WHATEVER you do, do not follow them! Do not believe them! God has them marked for destruction on the Day Christ judges the world. Trust Him. He will protect and preserve you.

How do these wicked ones appear today in the local church? What do they look like? Don't just think of the more obvious ones who have big names and are on TV. And don't even think just of people who write books or who stand in pulpits and preach (though many of these false teachers do in fact write books and stand in pulpits). These kind can and probably do most often show up as people who look like Christians, who know the right words, but their goal is to glorify themselves and to do that they USE others to feed their greed. They always, always, always work to lead people away from Christ, they deny the truths of Christ's word, and they work to make people exalt them.

I can give you a perfect example of just such a person, though on a bit larger scale. I saw this just this past week. Here is a pastor who rather fancies himself a celebrity. And actually he is. Each week several times

he appears on stage before his 3,000 or so member audience who hang on his every word. He has an orchestra and each "worship service" is carefully choreographed.

Now, of late the pastor has been troubled. The numbers are down a bit. Attendance. Financial income. The stats just aren't real encouraging and he is feeling the heat. After all, he promised to deliver when the church board nominated him as the new pastor.

His message is essentially the same each week, just wrapped in various different forms. God loves everyone. God wants to fix you and your problems. God is kind and merciful to everyone, but in particular He blesses those who bless Him with their time and money and other resources.

And now – now, this pastor prophet has heard from the Lord. The reason the numbers are at a plateau is because people need "excellence" in today's sophisticated world. And they need space – lot's of space if we are going to expect them to come join this church. The solution? God says we must build. And He says that we must build big and that requires a big faith. In fact, this expansion is going to require \$10 million dollars. The worship center and sanctuary will be

incredible, as will the main entry area where the barista lounges will be. And God says that the money needed is, right at this moment, sitting in the bank accounts of the congregation. God is just waiting to pour out the windows of heavenly blessing on everyone who trusts Him and sacrificially gives in faith. Untold souls will be won for Christ.

And now, to show you a model of the kind of faith God is looking for, the pastor introduces Chad and Jennifer Jones. Chad is a corporate engineer and Jennifer heads up with women's ministry program at the church, has written a book or two, speaks at conferences, and loves Jesus!

You can guess what Chad and Jennifer have to say. "God is at work here and that is why WE are all out committed to this building expansion for His kingdom. We don't know where all the money we are going to give is coming from, but we have pledged more than we would have imagined! Don't YOU want to be a part of this kingdom work??!!

Now, let the Scriptures tell you what is really going on here. It is 2 Peter. This pastor, his philosophy of ministry, his preaching and teaching, is ALL in absolute denial of the Master, the Lord Jesus Christ. Stop! In all the hype, in

all the "praise His name's" just stop and think about the Christ of Scripture. Compare Him with what you are seeing. And what must you conclude?

I will tell you. You already know: It is another Jesus, another gospel, another spirit. It is anathema, cursed by God and it is all designed to lead you away from Christ to a false god for the glory of man.

Here is what is really going on in every single so-called church. Let the Lord Himself strip away the walls and look inside behind the scenes. Here it is:

Ezekiel 8:6-18 And he said to me, "Son of man, do you see what they are doing, the great abominations that the house of Israel are committing here, to drive me far from my sanctuary? But you will see still greater abominations."

(7) And he brought me to the entrance of the court, and when I looked, behold, there was a hole in the wall. (8) Then he said to me, "Son of man, dig in the wall." So I dug in the wall, and behold, there was an entrance. (9) And he said to me, "Go in, and see the vile abominations that they are committing here." (10) So I went in and saw. And there, engraved on the wall all around, was every form of creeping things and loathsome beasts,

and all the idols of the house of Israel.

(11) And before them stood seventy men of the elders of the house of Israel, with Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan standing among them. Each had his censer in his hand, and the smoke of the cloud of incense went up.

(12) Then he said to me, "Son of man, have you seen what the elders of the house of Israel are doing in the dark, each in his room of pictures? For they say, 'The LORD does not see us, the LORD has forsaken the land.'" (13) He said also to me, "You will see still greater abominations that they commit."

(14) Then he brought me to the entrance of the north gate of the house of the LORD, and behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz. (15) Then he said to me, "Have you seen this, O son of man? You will see still greater abominations than these."

(16) And he brought me into the inner court of the house of the LORD. And behold, at the entrance of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, were about twenty-five men, with their backs to the temple of the LORD, and their faces toward the east, worshiping the sun toward the east. (17) Then he said to me, "Have you seen this, O son of man? Is it too light a thing for the house of Judah to

commit the abominations that they commit here, that they should fill the land with violence and provoke me still further to anger? Behold, they put the branch to their nose. (18) Therefore I will act in wrath. My eye will not spare, nor will I have pity. And though they cry in my ears with a loud voice, I will not hear them."

And there it is. This is the reality of the wicked ones who creep in among us.

Make no mistake, Peter warns us, Just as false prophets arose among the people, so they will arise among you.