

WRESTING THE SCRIPTURES

TEXT: II PETER 3:14-18

INTRODUCTION:

1. Second Peter 3:16 says, "As also in all his (Paul's) epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction."
2. This reminds us that Paul's epistles were already considered sacred scripture when Peter wrote his second epistle.
3. I want to preach this morning about the word "wrest." This is the only time we see this word in the Bible.
4. The word means "to twist," and that is how it is translated in most of the newer translations.
5. *Vine's Expository Dictionary* says the word means, "to torture," and is used metaphorically in II Peter 3:16.

I. WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE WREST THE SCRIPTURES?

1. What kind of person would "twist" (or "torture") the Word of God?
2. Second Peter 3:16 says they are "unlearned" and "unstable" (cf. II Peter 2:14).
3. I suppose the number 1 Bible twister would be the pope of Rome. Recently the pope said everyone -- whether a believer or an atheist -- is saved by "doing good" ("Pope Francis Says Atheists Who Do Good Are Redeemed, Not Just Catholics," www.huffingtonpost.com).
4. The pope said, "The Lord has redeemed all of us, all of us, with the blood of Christ: all of us, not just Catholics. Everyone! Even the atheists. Everyone!...We must meet one another doing good."
5. So the pope would be the most notable culprit since over billion Roman Catholics claim he is the "vicar of Christ."
6. Nowhere in the Bible did our Lord say He was going to need a so-called "vicar" (substitute) to fill in for Him during His absence.
7. Our Lord promised to send the Holy Spirit, the blessed "Comforter" (cf. John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7-11).
8. To "wrest" the Scriptures means to "twist" the Scriptures. For example, for the pope to say that atheists are redeemed is twisting the Scriptures.
9. The term *redemption* means to deliver by paying a price, to free from bondage. The death of Christ is represented in the Bible as the payment of a ransom.

10. Our Lord said in Mark 10:45, "For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."
11. Christ died for the sins of the whole world, but only those who believe in Him are saved.
12. "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:18).
13. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36).
14. The pope also suggested that people (such as atheists) can be saved by their good works. This contradicts the Bible, which repeatedly says we are saved by God's grace, and not by works.
15. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8, 9).
16. This is plain enough yet hundreds of millions of church members think they will go to heaven because of their good works -- because "unlearned and unstable" wrest the Scriptures (II Peter 3:16).
17. Countless times I have asked sinners if they knew they were going to heaven, and they have told me, "I'm working on it." But a man cannot work his way into heaven.
18. One foolish man said, "Going to heaven is like rowing a boat. One paddle is faith, and the other paddle is works." Well, if you try that you will be paddling around in circles for a long time.
19. In any event, we cannot take a rowboat to heaven! "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us" (Titus 3:5).
20. Lost, unregenerate sinners are blinded by Satan in regard to the true gospel of grace, and one of the marks of a cult and all false religions is their denial of salvation by God's grace.

II. HOW DO THESE PEOPLE WREST THE SCRIPTURES?

1. They wrest them by taking something that is true, and then twisting it to mean something entirely untrue. For example, the pope was right to say redemption is by the blood of Christ.
2. The apostle Paul told the elders of Ephesus, "to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28).

3. Christ purchased the church. Christ redeemed the church. Ephesians 5:25 says, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it."
4. Colossians 1:14 says, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." "We" refers to believers, not atheists.
5. Another way men twist Scripture is the way they attempt to use Scripture to justify their sin. We see the devil doing this in Matthew 4:6, when he said to our Lord, "If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone."
6. Shakespeare said, "The devil can cite Scripture for his purpose."
7. I have heard drunkards refer to the wedding at Cana where Jesus turned water into wine (John 2:1-11).
8. In the Bible, the Greek word translated "wine" can be either fermented wine or unfermented wine (grape juice). Proverbs 23:20 says, "Be not among winebibbers; among riotous eaters of flesh: For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags."
9. If the six water-pots of stone were filled with fermented wine (John 2:6), then our Lord would be surrounded by winebibbers.
10. One firkin is about nine gallons (Scofield margin). This would mean our Lord produced about 162 gallons of wine (John 2:6, 7).
11. But if there had been 162 gallons of fermented wine at that wedding, some people would have gotten drunk. Habakkuk 2:15 says, "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and maketh him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness!"
12. Therefore that must have been unfermented wine.
13. It's not just the drunkards that twist Scripture, the adulterers do it too. I have heard adulterers say with a smirk, "David was a man after God's own heart, and he committed adultery."
14. The Bible teaches you must reap what you sow, and David suffered greatly for his sin. Sin always brings death, misery, heartache and woe.
15. The prophet Nathan said to David, "Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house..." (II Samuel 12:10). Think of the terrible fulfillment of this prophecy! It was fourfold, just as Nathan said.

- (1) The baby conceived with Bath-sheba died within the week (12:14-18).
 - (2) In the very next chapter we read of the horrible rape of David's daughter Tamar by her own half-brother Amnon.
 - (3) And then Absalom killed Amnon.
 - (4) And then Absalom rebelled against David, his father, and tried to take over the kingdom. And then Absalom, hanging helplessly from the branches of a great oak tree, was killed by Joab and thrown into a pit. And when David heard the terrible report he cried out, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" (II Sam. 18:33). David paid fourfold!
16. Even the homosexuals twist Scripture to justify their sin. They say God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah because the Sodomites had bad manners!
 17. They say Romans 1 does not condemn homosexuality, it only condemns homosexual rape, etc. But the Bible condemns all homosexuality. "Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination" (Lev. 18:22).
 18. A few months ago, the History Channel ran a mini-series called, "The Bible," but they were guilty of wresting the Scriptures.
 19. For example, in their version of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the episode nowhere states why God destroyed them.
 20. There is absolutely no hint in the film that the perverted Sodomites tried to gang rape the angels. By the way, this film is now in the theatres. I believe Christians should avoid it (and the foolish Noah film) like the plague.
 21. God can save a homosexual, just like God can save a drunkard or an adulterer, but God saves them from their sin. He never saves anyone in his sin.
 22. Our Lord said, "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3, 5).

III. WHAT HAPPENS TO THOSE WHO WREST THE SCRIPTURES?

1. Second Peter 3:16 says they do this "unto their own destruction."
2. The Greek lexicon says the word translated "destruction" means, "eternal misery in hell."
3. "Destruction" here means, "eternal misery in hell." Not annihilation, and not purgatory. Eternal misery in hell.

4. The word is used 20 times in the New Testament.
5. Our Lord said in Matthew 7:13, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat."
6. Romans 9:22 describes sinners as "vessels of wrath fitted to destruction."
7. Philippians 3:18 and 19 refer to "the enemies of the cross of Christ." Paul says, "Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things."
8. Sometimes this same word is translated "damnation" (II Peter 2:3).
9. And sometimes this same word is translated "perdition." Twice in Revelation 17 it says the antichrist will "go into perdition" (17:8, 11).
10. In fact, the apostle Paul refers to the antichrist as "the son of perdition" in II Thessalonians 2:3.
11. Those who wrest the Scriptures do it unto their own judgment. They may deny the existence of hell but they will surely go there because of their unbelief.

CONCLUSION:

1. Peter ends his second epistle with a word of admonition -- "Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness" (3:17).
2. Let us not be "led away with the error of the wicked."
3. "But grow in grace..." (3:18). The Christian life cannot be static -- you are either growing in grace, or you are backsliding!