

- Welcome back and good to see everyone this morning. Today we will begin our journey through 2 Peter – the 2nd Chapter.
 - We spent several weeks in 2 Peter 1 – and I believe we extracted just about all the juice out of that chapter we could possibly squeeze.
 - Anyways, when we last left off, we finished our teaching last week by focusing on verses 16-21 of Chapter 1.
 - And my NASB Bible entitled this section of Scripture – Eyewitnesses.
 - Which made sense since it highlighted how it was that Peter James and John were eyewitness to Jesus and the transfiguration.
 - In this section of scripture Peter was trying to say, look we aren't telling you this stuff because someone told us about it. No – we saw it with our own eyes, we lived it.
 - We stood with Jesus on the Holy Mountain, and saw Him transfigured into a radiant bright light.
 - Therefore – you can trust our word, or as he said in verse 16:

2 Peter 1:16 For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty.

- From there Peter finishes out the chapter by letting the readers know there is but only 1 prophetic word.
 - It came from God through the Prophets in Old Testament.
 - And then through the Apostles in the New Testament.
 - And once God had completed His work of inspiring each book or letter of the Bible, it was canonized into 66 books with roughly 44 Authors.
 - And so – with that, Peter's message was crystal clear –
 - There is no new prophecy of scripture
 - Which means – if someone says they have a new prophetic word, I would be leery of that individual, because it's simply not true!
- Now – why is this important?
 - It's important – because if you believe what Peter said, then you can find great peace and comfort in knowing that all you will ever need to know about life – it's situations, circumstances and God (i.e. His character) who he truly is – has been recorded once and for all in this thing we all have access to – the Book we call the Bible.
 - Which means in a world of uncertainty, where you can't count on anything – the Bible is the one thing you can depend on.
 - And if you think about that for just a minute, you should obtain (as I said earlier), a great peace and solitude.

- Knowing this, it's very important we don't have people popping up with New Revelations of God, because if we did there would be no peace or solitude found in a Word that is always changing.
 - And why? Because we would always be wondering.
 - Wondering – if what that person is saying is from God or not!
 - And this was and is the problem with Mormons and the Church of Latter-day Saints.
- In the 1800's a man by the name of Joseph Smith showed up on the scene, proclaiming to have a new revelation from God.
 - And from those revelations He published a book at the age of 24 – called the book of Mormon
 - Now according to Smith he was visited by two Angels whom he said were God and Jesus Christ.
 - And those angels directed him to a buried book of Golden Plates which were inscribed with the Judeo-Christian history of an Ancient American civilization.
 - In 1830 Smith published the Book of Mormon – which he described as an English Translation of those plates.
- Without turning today's lesson into a study on the history of Mormonism, some of what you should know (at a high level) about the LDS Church is:
 - A – The book of Mormon contradicts teachings in the Bible.
 - B – Joseph Smith said there was nothing wrong with polygamy (multiple wives).
 - C – His cultic religion adopted many other anti-biblical rituals as well.
 - To be honest, when you study Mormonism – you will see close similarities to many of the paganistic and other types of anti-biblical rituals throughout His teachings.
 - And just a side note, I find it interesting how all these other religions seem to somehow squeeze in sexual perversions into their commonly accepted practices.
 - Practices by the way that don't seem to benefit women at all – just men!
 - Strange – how it works out that way. Sorry ladies!
- Anyways, my point is, if God allowed new revelation to be introduced sporadically and periodically – how would you know what to trust?
 - The answer is – you wouldn't, and that's why the scripture makes it clear that there is no new Prophecy!
 - All that God wanted us to know is in your Bible – and that's it, the end!
- Moving on. Next, we move into Chapter 2 of 2 Peter and let's see what he has to say:

2 Peter 2:1 But false prophets also appeared 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 Peter 2:2 Many will follow their indecent behavior, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned.

2 Peter 2:3 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.

- So, Peters' words here in Chapter 2 pretty much fall in line with Mormonism/Islam/Jehovah's Witness/Hinduism.
 - And these are just a few of the religions we are all familiar with but there are many more.
 - Some of which have long since died, but many of which still exist today.
- Now before I get into this too deep, let me speak a disclaimer. There was a time in this country when a Pastor could stand in a pulpit and denounce other religions – but not today, because if you do, people tend to get upset.
 - Now I am going to assume no one is going to get upset with what I am about to say this morning, but just in case you do – please remember, once again “I am not making the news, I am simply reporting it”
 - Some might say, Yea – reporting it the way you see it.
 - And to them – I would say “Touche”. You are correct – How else would I report it? Would I report it as someone else sees it, obviously not!
 - So yes – I am reporting this information based on what God's Word says.
 - No – I don't believe there are multiple versions of religion.
 - Or multiple ways to get to Heaven
 - Or that God accepts them all!
 - I do not believe that to be the case!
 - And why – because I have studied the scriptures for 20 years.
 - And I have studied many other religions for over the past 20 plus years as well.
 - And when you line up the historical accuracy of the Bible, and when I say historical accuracy I mean how it is that other books (non-Biblical books), how they testify and validate much of what the Bible says.
 - There is no way I would put my money on any other revelation of man – much less an entirely new religion that came long after the Hebrew and Greek manuscripts we created.
- Now, having said that, let me say, the gravest danger to the Christian Church isn't necessarily Mormonism or Jehovah's Witness or Islam
 - It's biblical deviation from within the walls of the church
 - Meaning a Biblical deviation (which is sometimes slight and sometimes large), this is the biggest danger facing the church today.

- What I find interesting is, how Peter writes about this deviation thousands of years before it became the extreme issue it is today.
 - Don't get me wrong – false teachers and religions have always been around – especially in Peter's day, but believe it or not his words are more relevant today than ever before.
 - Specifically – when we think about what he was saying in verse 1 of 2 Peter 2 where it says:

2 Peter 2:1 But false prophets also appeared 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.

- Now, when Peter mentions False prophets and False Teachers, he is speaking about two different types of people.
 - False Prophets refer to people in the Old Testament who many times taught a different religion of the True Prophets – men and or women who tried to lead people away from the true prophets' words, God's words.
 - Whereas False teachers refer to people within the church who rise and begin teaching some version or perversion of God's Word.
 - Let me give you an example of what I mean.
 - Asian Mysticism was rampant during Paul and Peter's time, and it runs contrary to Christianity.
 - Asian Mysticism doesn't confirm Christianity or the existence of Jesus – rather it teaches something altogether different.
 - That would be an example of something False Prophets would teach.
 - Whereas False Teachers may teach a heresy but they do so while being a part of the church.
- Which brings me back to verse 1 where the key to that verse – especially as it relates to where we are today – lies in the words:

“Who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them”

- I want to highlight a few of those heresies for you here today but remember – don't take my word for it. I want you to study it for yourself and decide if what I am saying is true!
- First on the list is – Oneness, which denies the existence of the “Trinity”.
 - Proponents of the oneness philosophy say there is no God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit
 - They say there is only one God, not a triune God!

- They even take it step further and say, if you were baptized in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Ghost – your baptism is no good.
- And you must be re-baptized in Jesus' Name only.
- First let me say, this teaching is so far off track and so weak that it's not even debated among serious theologians (nor has it ever been). And why is that?
 - Well first when we read the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-19 it clearly says, and I quote:

Matt 28:18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

Matt 28:19 “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,

- Preachers who teach oneness agree with what Matthew says. They don't deny that it clearly states we are to baptize them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
 - But they then come back and ask those whom they debate a question – which is: Who is The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost?
 - At which point they then ask and answer their own question, when they say – it's Jesus.
 - Jesus – is the Father – Son and Holy Ghost.
- Now – there are at least two problems with this teaching, and it begins with the purpose of Baptism.
 - If you believe Baptism saves you then I would encourage you need to go do an exhaustive study on Baptism – specifically its origin and purposes.
 - Then two – obviously Matthew clearly says go ye therefore, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
 - And just in case you are wondering what the Greek says. That's exactly what the Greek says as well.
- But that leads us to a dilemma, a dilemma that says:
 - Either A – God is trying to trick us.
 - Or B – someone came up with oneness for some alternate reason!
 - And guess what? If you guessed “B” – you would be correct.
 - Where did this theory of oneness come from?
 - The oneness theory is a relatively new teaching.
 - It was developed in or around 1914 – it was part of a movement that first emerged in North America because of a schism (a split or division) following doctrinal disputes within the nascent (Nay-snt) – finished work – of the *Pentecostal* Church.
 - Nascent simply means a coming or having recently come into existence, the beginning development –

- As I said, this emerged out of the Pentecostal Movement which had broken off from the Holiness Pentecostalism – specifically within the Assemblies of God.
- This all came about when:
 - In April of 1913 – at an Apostolic Faith Worldwide Camp Meeting which was held in California, a Canadian Preacher named R.E. McAlister preached a “New Revelation”.
 - He said that his new revelation revealed to him a new baptismal formula.
 - One that said being baptized in Jesus Name was preferred over the 3-part formula of God the Father, the Son, and Holy Ghost.
 - Which is found as a command by Jesus in Matt. 28:19
 - This man pointed to Acts 2:38 as his proof text, where Luke wrote the following.

Acts 2:37 Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what are we to do?”

Acts 2:38 Peter *said* to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

- Now in Acts 2:38 it clearly says:

“Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit”,

- So now what do we do?
 - Matthew says – go ye therefore baptizing them in the name of the Father – Son and Holy Ghost.
 - And Acts says baptizing them in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins.
 - Well either A – our Bible has a conflict or B – it does not.
 - And if we go with B, then we must simply refer to a favorite saying of my mentor and dear friend Stephen Armstrong.
 - Who said – when the plain sense makes common sense, we seek no other sense and when it doesn’t, we must dig deeper.
 - And sure enough, if we dig deeper – we will find our answer.
- Now – before I give you the answer – let me say one more time:
 - If you do an exhaustive study of baptism and answer the question “why” did God choose baptism as a sacrament of our faith?
 - You will automatically answer the question as to why it doesn’t matter which name or names a person is baptized in.
 - Having said that, to reconcile this issue, we must first understand the context of Matt. 28:19 – The Great Commission and line it up to Acts 2:38.

- Basically, when Jesus gave the Great Commission, He was sending His followers into all the world to make disciples “of all nations” (Matthew 28:19).
 - In the pagan world that they would encounter, many knew absolutely nothing about One True God – they were an idolatrous people who were “without hope and without God in the world” (Ephesians 2:12).
 - In preaching the gospel to such people, the apostles would necessarily have to include teaching on what God is like, including His triune nature. (Example being the basic information Paul addresses the Athenians with in Acts 17.)
 - For those who received the gospel and were baptized – they would be converting to an entirely different religious system and would be embracing a new understanding of who God is.
 - In contrast, when Peter was speaking on the Day of Pentecost to faithful Jewish people – they already understood God the Father and God’s Spirit.
 - The part of the equation they were missing was Jesus, the Son of God—and without Jesus, they could not be saved (Acts 4:12).
- In presenting the gospel to the Jews, Peter commands them to be baptized in Jesus’ name; that is, to exercise faith in the One they had crucified.
 - They had already professed God as the Father and the Spirit, but they needed to profess His Son.
 - Those who received the gospel that day devoted themselves to the lordship of Jesus.
 - As they no longer rejected Him but acknowledged Him as their Messiah – the only one who could deliver Hope for salvation.
- This is a high-level understanding of the two differences, but having said that, let me say – I have a book at home called the Book of Denominations.
 - It lists every registered church denomination in the United States – at least those who have applied for 501C3 tax exempt status.
 - This book is several years old – but at the time it was published there were over 4000 plus registered denominations in the U.S.
 - In that book you can read the history and formation of the denomination, and what I can tell you is, most of them broke off from another denomination.
 - And they did so – over some New Revelation.
 - A supposedly New Revelation of God given to one individual.
 - That is how all these denominations were formed, and this oneness teaching is a prime example of what I am talking about.
- Now what I can tell you is this, if we stick with what Peter is telling us – along with other Authors of Scripture – we would never have over 4000 denominations in our country, and we would never entertain such a teaching as Oneness.
 - There is no new revelation!
- Now, I have a question for you – Have you ever wondered why New Revelations are such a thing?

- The answer is Pride – Pride!
- At its core – it's the Ole "I know something you don't know mentality"
 - God has revealed something to me that the others don't know!
 - That is what it all boils down to!
- Let me say one more thing before moving on to another destructive teaching of our modern day era – and that is (once again), "The Sum of Thy Word Is Whole"!
 - I said this last week – scripture must be interpreted wholistically.
 - Not separately or individually!
 - Throughout the years, when I have debated people on various topics, they always seem to isolate their debate to a few scriptures.
 - They hone in on a few verses –
 - They eat them, drink them, sleep them, and believe them.
 - But they don't know the rest of the Bible.
 - Which causes a serious issue, because you cannot interpret scripture on the testimony of one or two single verses.
 - It just won't work!
 - So just remember that when you enter a debate on a particular Bible topic!
- Moving on. Before we close this morning I want to highlight one more heresy of scripture – one that poses what I believe the "Greatest Threat" to the modern church.
 - And that is "Easy beliefism".
 - Now let me say this about this issue, easy beliefism isn't really something that is taught outright.
 - Meaning, it isn't an actual identified and labeled teaching.
 - Easy beliefism, is a culture – a way of life – so to speak.
 - Meaning – it's a teaching, but it's not identified as a stand-alone teaching.
 - Easy beliefism says, just walk down an aisle – repeat the words that the preacher tells you to repeat, and you will be saved!
 - It's that simple – hence, why it's called easy beleifism!
 - "Easy Beliefism" emerged as part of the evangelical movement in America, that was Great in and of itself. At least it was great until someone said, well if one is good then two must be better!
 - Meaning, if we saw one person surrender their life to Christ, then we should do an evaluation on what caused that person to make their decision.
 - Meaning, evaluate the preacher's message – how what he said may have had influence into that person's decision
 - And if we can identify what he said then we can improve upon it.
 - And next time – maybe we will see two people surrender their life to Christ.

- Once again – at the core of “Easy Beliefism” is none other than Pride.
- Some might try and argue against this point – but it’s the truth.
- When Easy Beliefism began it was pure in its intent, but later it evolved into a place where church services had as their focus manipulation tactics, which influenced people's reasoning for why they should make a decision for Christ.
 - Which is what led to where we are today as a church.
 - The problem with all this is, the Church has subconsciously said to God "Stand back – we got this".
 - They have intervened – and began counterfeiting the work of the Holy Spirit!
 - They have done this all in the name of, or the Spirit of, Evangelism! – or in the name of getting people saved!
 - Problem is, when you (once again) do an exhaustive study on Soteriology, which is the study of Salvation (specifically, how people are truly saved), you will discover there is no need to manipulate anything, because God is the one who saves.
 - He is the one who initiates the “pricking of the heart”.
 - And He is the one who finishes that work in the heart of an individual.
 - Just as Paul said in Philippians 1:6 – when he said:

Phil. 1:6 *For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work among you will complete it by the day of Christ Jesus.*

- Easy Beliefism takes God out of the center of the equation and replaces Him with man!
 - Which means if I (as the preacher) can craft my message in a way that moves you emotionally, or if I can amp up the service with high powered music, then maybe I can influence you, and or move you into a decision for Christ!
 - But as I said – look who is at the center of all of this. It’s not God – it's man!
 - And of course – the result of this practice or method, leads to confusion and false conversion!
 - These examples, line up perfectly with what Peter is saying in verse 1 when he says:

2 Peter 2:1 *But false prophets also appeared 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.*

- False teachers are a serious issue in our day, and I would say – more so than at any other time in history.
 - Now let me close our service today by saying I gave you just two teachings that line

up with what Peter is saying but there are 100's more.

- And each one of them serves to damage the underlying fabric of our faith.
- It is imperative that we question everything that we are being told and then line it back up against scripture.
- And guys that is my prayer this morning – for everyone sitting here that we would become a church that would increase in the knowledge of God – so that we can join together and eliminate confusion in the mind of the believer – and that we would become bold in our faith.
 - Because we are confident in what we believe!
 - And the byproduct of our increased knowledge of God would be, that God would use us in the work he is doing in and around us everyday.
 - That's my prayer! Amen – Amen!