



LESSON FIVE

God's Governmental Judgement and the Exposure of the False Teachers

Scripture Reading:

2 Peter 2

- 2:1** But there arose also false prophets among the people, as also among you there will be false teachers, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction.
- 2:2** And many will follow their licentiousness, because of whom the way of the truth will be reviled.
- 2:3** And in covetousness, with fabricated words, they will make merchandise of you, for whom the judgment of old is not idle, and their destruction does not slumber.
- 2:4** For if God did not spare the angels who sinned but delivered them to gloomy pits, having cast them down to Tartarus, they being kept for judgment;
- 2:5** And did not spare the ancient world but guarded Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly;
- 2:6** And having reduced to ashes the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, condemned them to ruin, having set them as an example to those who intend to live an ungodly life,
- 2:7** And rescued righteous Lot, who had been oppressed by the licentious manner of life of the lawless
- 2:8** (For that righteous man, who settled down among them, in seeing and hearing tormented his righteous soul day after day with their lawless works);
- 2:9** The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of trial and how to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment,
- 2:10** And especially those who go after the flesh in the lust for defilement and despise lordship. Daring, self-willed, they do not tremble while reviling dignities;
- 2:11** Whereas angels, though they are greater in strength and power, do not bring a reviling judgment against them before the Lord.
- 2:12** But these, like animals without reason, born natural for capture and destruction, reviling in things of which they are ignorant, will also in their corrupting of others be destroyed;
- 2:13** Suffering unrighteousness as the wages of unrighteousness; considering luxury in the day to be pleasure; spots and blemishes, reveling in their deceits while feasting together with you;
- 2:14** Having eyes full of adultery and not ceasing from sin; enticing unstable souls, having a heart exercised for covetousness, children of curse.
- 2:15** Forsaking the straight way, they have gone astray, following the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness
- 2:16** But had reproof for his own transgression: a dumb beast of burden, uttering with a man's voice, restrained the madness of the prophet.
- 2:17** These are springs without water and mists driven by a storm, for whom the gloom of darkness is kept.
- 2:18** For uttering great swelling words of vanity, they entice by lusts of the flesh, with licentiousness, those who are barely escaping from them who live in error;
- 2:19** Promising freedom to them, while they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom anyone has been defeated, by this one he has been enslaved.
- 2:20** For if, having escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ but having again been entangled in these, they are defeated, the last state has become worse for them than the first.

- 2:21** For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than, knowing it, to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them.
- 2:22** It has happened to them according to the true proverb: The dog has turned to its own vomit, and the washed sow to wallowing in the mud.

QUESTIONS:

Section 1:

1. Who are the false teachers? What do they focus on?
2. What are the consequences of apostasy under God's judgement?

Section 2:

1. What is God's judgement on the false teachers and fallen angels?
2. What does it mean to be righteous and godly? How does it contrast to living an ungodly life?

Section 3:

1. What is the highest sense within man? What are the examples of someone who have given up the consciousness of their conscience?
2. What is the straight way mentioned in 2:15? How does it relate to Balaam's story?

Section 4:

1. Explain why Peter stresses both the manner of life and the way of life in his epistle.
2. Why Peter use "dogs" and "sows" to describe the false teachers?
3. What was the background when 2 Peter was written? How does it apply to today's situation?

----- [SECTION 1] -----

The first chapter of the Epistle of 2 Peter is on the divine provision. This provision includes two matters: life and light. The first part of chapter one emphasizes the divine life, and the second part emphasizes the divine light. The divine life is contained in the faith that has been allotted to us, and the divine light is contained in God's word, in the word of the Old Testament prophets and the New Testament apostles. Therefore, life and light are the two components of the divine provision.

Chapters two and three of 2 Peter are on God's government. In the messages on 1 Peter we had much to say regarding God's governmental judgment. Chapters two and three of 2 Peter continue to show us how God exercises His governmental judgment. In 2 Peter 2 we see God's judgment on the false teachers (2:1-3), God's judgment of old on both angels and men (vv. 4-9), and the evils of the false teachers and their punishment under God's judgment (vv. 10-22).

FALSE TEACHERS BRINGING IN DESTRUCTIVE HERESIES

Second Peter 2:1 says, "But there arose also false prophets among the people, as also among you there will be false teachers, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction." After presenting to the believers the rich provision of the divine life and the shining enlightenment of the divine truth, thus providing for the maintenance of life and inoculating against the poison of apostasy, the apostle Peter faithfully indicates as a warning to the believers in this chapter the awful contents of the apostasy and its dreadful result. This warning is a close parallel to that given in Jude 4-19.

In the Old Testament there were not only genuine prophets speaking God's word, which is like a lamp shining upon us, but there were also false prophets among the people. In 2:1 Peter says that there will be also false teachers among us, those who will secretly bring in destructive heresies.

The Greek words rendered "secretly bring in" may also be translated "bring in by smuggling." Literally, the Greek means to bring in alongside,

to bring in sideways, to introduce a new subject for which the hearers are not prepared. Here it denotes the false teachers bringing in and introducing their false teachings alongside the true ones. These false teachings are called destructive heresies, or, literally, heresies of destruction.

"Heresy" is an anglicized Greek word, *hairesis*, which means choices of opinion of doctrine different from that usually accepted, "self-chosen doctrines alien from the truth" (Alford), thus causing division and producing sects. This word is also used in Acts 5:17; 15:5; 24:5, 14; 26:5; 28:22; 1 Corinthians 11:19; Galatians 5:20; and Titus 3:10 in the adjective form, *hairetikos*, heretical. Here it denotes the false and heretical doctrines brought in by the false teachers, the heretics, similar to the doctrines of today's Modernism.

Heresy involves three matters: opinion, the causing of divisions, and the producing of sects. Therefore, opinion, divisions, and sects are the three constituents of heresy. Heresy, of course, is not constructive. Instead of building up the church, heresy destroys the church. For this reason, Peter speaks of destructive heresies, or heresies of destruction.

DENYING THE MASTER

In Peter's words the false teachers even deny the Master who bought them. The word "Master" implies the Lord's Person and His redemptive work. The false teachers at Peter's time, like today's Modernists in their apostasy, denied both the Lord's Person as the Master and His redemption, by which He purchased the believers.

BRINGING UPON THEMSELVES SWIFT DESTRUCTION

Peter says that the false teachers will bring upon themselves swift destruction. No doubt, this means that destruction will come upon them.

In this Epistle Peter uses three different Greek words concerning the consequence of the apostasy under God's judgment. *Apollumi* signifies to destroy utterly; in middle voice, to perish, as in 3:6, 9. The idea is not extinction, but ruin, loss, not of being, but of well-being. Its usage in Matthew 10:28; 22:7; Mark 12:9; Luke 17:27, 29; John 3:16; 10:28;

17:12; 1 Corinthians 10:9, 10; 2 Corinthians 2:15; 4:3; 2 Thessalonians 2:10; and Jude 5, 11 unveils more of God's governmental judgment.

Apoleia, akin to *apollumi*, indicates loss of well-being, not of being, ruin, destruction, or perdition (physical, spiritual, or eternal). It is used for "destruction" in 2:1 (twice), 3; 3:7, 16. The same word denotes different results of God's varied judgments (see second paragraph of note 17² in 1 Pet. 1). In cases such as those described in 2 Peter 2:1, 3; 3:7; John 17:12; Rom. 9:22; Phil. 1:28; 3:19; 2 Thessalonians 2:3; and Revelation 17:8, 11, it denotes eternal perdition. In cases such as those described in 2 Peter 3:16 and Heb. 10:39, it denotes the punishment of God's governmental discipline, not eternal perdition. In Matthew 7:13 and 1 Timothy 6:9, it denotes a principle for any case.

Phthora denotes corruption unto destruction, destruction that comes with corruption, destroying by means of corrupting, of morality, soul, and body. It is used for "corruption" in 1:4; 2:12, and 19, and for "corrupting" in 2:12. The verb form, *phtheiro*, is used in future passive voice for "shall be corrupted" in 2:12, and in present passive voice for "are being corrupted" in Jude 10. Its significance can be further seen in Romans 8:21; 1 Corinthians 3:17; 15:33; 2 Corinthians 7:2; 11:3; Galatians 6:8; Revelation 11:18; and 19:2.

CAUSING THE WAY OF TRUTH TO BE REVILED

In verse 2 Peter continues, "And many will follow their licentiousness, because of whom the way of the truth will be reviled." The way of the truth is the path of the Christian life according to the truth, which is the reality of the contents of the New Testament (1 Tim. 2:4; 3:15; 4:3; 2 Tim. 2:15, 18; Titus 1:1). It is designated by other titles according to its various virtues, like the straight way (2 Pet. 2:15; see Heb. 12:13), the way of righteousness (2 Pet. 2:21; Matt. 21:32), the way of peace (Luke 1:79; Rom. 3:17), the way of salvation (Acts 16:17), the way of God (Matt. 22:16; Acts 18:26), the way of the Lord (John 1:23; Acts 18:25), and the way (Acts 9:2; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:22). It was slandered as the way of heresy (Acts 24:14).

Because of the false teachers, the way of the truth will be reviled. Since the way of the truth is the way of reality, and the way of reality is the way

of God's economy, this means that the false teachers will cause the entire revelation of the New Testament to be reviled.

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GOD'S GOVERNMENTAL JUDGMENT

In verse 3 Peter goes on to say, "And by covetousness with fabricated words they will make merchandise of you, for whom the judgment of old is not idle, and their destruction does not slumber." Peter's first Epistle stressed God's governmental judgment (1 Pet. 4:17-18). This is continued in the second Epistle. Under God's government the fallen angels were caught and are being kept for judgment (2:4), and the age of the deluge and the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were all judged (vv. 5-9). But God will especially mete out serious judgment to the New Testament heretics (v. 10). And all the ungodly will be judged and destroyed at the day when the heavens and earth will be burned by fire (3:7). Because of this, the God of justice and holiness has begun His governmental judgment from His own household—the believers.

In verse 3 Peter indicates that as God exercised judgment upon the false teachers of old, that is, in ancient times, as illustrated in 2:4-9, so He will also exercise judgment upon today's false teachers. Peter says that for such ones the judgment is not idle, and their destruction does not slumber. God's judgment is not idle. This judgment will come upon the false teachers, and they will be destroyed.

THE JUDGMENT ON THE FALLEN ANGELS

In 2:4-9 Peter speaks concerning God's judgment of old on both angels and men. Verse 4 says, "For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but delivered them to gloomy pits, having cast them down to Tartarus, being kept for judgment." These angels are the fallen angels (see notes 19² in 1 Pet. 3 and 4¹ in Rev. 12), who were the first fallen ones in the universe in the sequence of historical facts recorded in this chapter. These angels have been delivered to gloomy pits, having been cast down to Tartarus. Tartarus is a deep and gloomy pit, where the fallen angels are detained as in a prison (see note 19³ in 1 Pet. 3).

In Tartarus the fallen angels are being kept for judgment or kept unto judgment. This will be the

judgment of the great day (Jude 6), which will probably be the judgment of the great white throne, executed upon all the dead, upon the demons, and probably also upon the fallen angels (Rev. 20:11-15). It is logical for all the angels, demons, and men who have joined Satan in his rebellion to be judged at the same time, in the same way, and with the same result, immediately after their evil leader is judged and cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:10). Into that place they also will be cast (see second paragraph of note 17² in 1 Pet. 1).

THE CASE OF NOAH AND THE WORLD OF THE UNGODLY

In verse 5 Peter says, “And did not spare the ancient world, but guarded Noah, the eighth, a herald of righteousness, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly.” To say that Noah was the eighth means that he was one of the eight (1 Pet. 3:20). Here Peter says that Noah was a herald of righteousness. To be righteous and godly or unrighteous and ungodly is crucial with respect to God’s governmental judgment (2 Pet. 2:5-9). To be righteous is to be right with man before God, and to be godly is to express God before man. This was the manner of life Noah and Lot lived, which spared them from God’s governmental judgment according to His righteousness.

Noah did not preach the gospel, but he preached God’s righteousness over against the corruption of his generation. As we have pointed out, Peter speaks of righteousness because his emphasis is on God’s government. Noah’s preaching of righteousness was related to God’s government. God told Noah that He would wipe out the world and that Noah should preach righteousness to his generation. God exercised His judgment upon that corrupted generation by bringing a flood upon the world of the ungodly.

THE CASE OF LOT AND THE JUDGMENT OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH

Verse 6 continues, “And having reduced to ashes the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, He condemned them to ruin, having set an example to those who intend to live an ungodly life.” To live an ungodly life is to live in the flesh in the lusts of men, not in the will of God; it is to work out the desire of the nations (1 Pet. 4:2-3) and to

live in a vain, ungodly manner of life (1 Pet. 1:18).

In verses 7 and 8 Peter says, “And rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the licentious manner of life of the lawless (for that righteous man making his home among them, in seeing and hearing, tormented his righteous soul day after day with their lawless works).” In these verses Peter uses three cases: the case of the fallen angels, the case of Noah and his generation, and the case of Lot and the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. These cases are presented according to their biblical sequence. In Genesis first the fallen angels are judged by God, then there is the judgment of Noah’s generation, and later there is the judgment upon the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Peter tells us in 2:7 that righteous Lot was oppressed by the licentious manner of life of the lawless. The word “lawless” here means unprincipled; it is a different word in Greek from lawless in verse 8. The lawless here especially denotes those who violate the law of nature and conscience. As God judged the lawless ones in Sodom and Gomorrah, He will also judge today’s sodomites.

In verses 7 and 8 Peter uses the word “righteous” three times in speaking of righteous Lot, that righteous man, and his righteous soul. This word is used in relation to God’s government. Likewise, the Greek words rendered lawless in verses 7 and 8 are also used here as governmental terms.

THE LORD DELIVERING THE GODLY OUT OF TRIAL AND KEEPING THE UNGODLY UNDER PUNISHMENT

In verse 9 Peter says, “The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of trial, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment.” The godly are those like Noah and Lot who live a godly life, in contrast to an ungodly life. The unrighteous are those who live an unrighteous life, in the licentious manner of the lawless, like those in Noah’s time and those in Sodom and Gomorrah. The day of judgment will be the day of the final judgment of the great white throne. The unrighteous ones who lived at the time of Noah and Lot must still face the judgment at the great white throne. After that

judgment has been carried out, they will be cast into the lake of fire.

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THE EXPOSURE OF THE FALSE TEACHERS

In 2:10 Peter says, “And especially those who go after the flesh in defiling lust, and despise lordship. Darers, self-willed, they do not tremble while reviling dignities.” From here to the end of the chapter, the exposure returns to the false teachers and their followers, a continuation of the exposure in verses 1 through 3. In God’s governmental dealing, they will be especially kept under punishment for the day of judgment because they go after the flesh, indulging in defiling lust and corrupting luxury for pleasure, and despise the Lord’s government, rebelling against His authority (vv. 10, 13-14,18). Thus, they become persons like animals without reason (v. 12), spots and blemishes to the believers as God’s treasure (v. 13), Balaam, in forsaking the straight way for unrighteous gain (v. 15), springs without water and mists driven by a storm (vv. 17-19), and dogs and sows that become defiled both inwardly and outwardly (vv. 20-22).

DESPISING LORDSHIP

Peter says that the false teachers despise lordship. Here “lordship” must refer to the lordship of Christ, which is the center of the divine government, dominion, and authority (Acts 2:36; Eph. 1:21; Col. 1:16).

Peter also says that the false teachers are self-willed and do not tremble while reviling dignities. They are self-willed in that they are self-pleasing, seeking pleasure for self. The Greek word rendered “dignities” literally means glories. It probably refers both to angels and men in power and authority (v. 11; Jude 9; Titus 3:1-2).

In verse 11 Peter continues, “Whereas angels, being greater in strength and power, do not bring a reviling judgment against them before the Lord.” Here “angels” and “them,” referring to dignities in verse 10, are mentioned in a general way. But in Jude 9 regarding the same case, the archangel Michael and the Devil are singled out. Because Michael realized that in the angelic order the Devil was higher than he, he did not dare to bring a reviling judgment against him. The words a “reviling judgment” in 2:11 actually

mean a condemnation. To refrain from bringing a reviling judgment against them before the Lord is to keep the order of authority in God’s government.

ANIMALS WITHOUT REASON

In verse 12 Peter goes on to say, “But these, as animals without reason, having been born natural for capture and corruption, reviling in things of which they are ignorant, shall also in their corrupting be corrupted.” Here “animals” literally means living creatures (including man) and refers to men living as animals. The King James Version adopts the rendering “natural brute beasts.”

“Without reason,” or “irrational” here means having no sense of moral issues. The highest sense within man is his spirit with the conscience as its leading part. Conscience governs man under God’s government since man’s fall. Some have “ceased from feeling” (Eph. 4:19) by giving up the consciousness of their conscience through their denial of God (Rom. 1:23-32). The first century heretics, like the Sadducees in ancient Judaism (Acts 23:8) and the Modernists of today, are in this category. They have denied the Lord to the uttermost so that their conscience is seared and has lost its consciousness (1 Tim. 4:2), as if they do not even have a spirit (Jude 10, 19). Thus, they become as animals without reason, as creatures of instinct, born natural to be captured, through their lust, by Satan the destroyer of man, that they may be corrupted unto destruction.

Peter says that those who become as animals without reason have been born for capture and corruption. The word “for” literally means unto and indicates that they are destined to be captured for corruption, to be made slaves of corruption (v. 19). But by the supply of life through the divine provision (1:3-4) we are able to escape this corruption that brings in destruction.

Peter tells us that the false teachers will also “in their corrupting be corrupted.” This means that while they are corrupting others, they themselves will also be corrupted.

FURTHER DETAILS

Verse 13 says, “Suffering unrighteousness as the wages of unrighteousness, counting luxury in the

day to be pleasure; spots and blemishes, reveling in their deceits, feasting together with you.” In verse 13 some manuscripts read “receiving the wages of unrighteousness.” Here unrighteousness refers to unrighteous doings. Peter uses the word “unrighteousness” in this verse in a governmental way.

According to verse 13, the false teachers are spots and blemishes. This means that the lust-indulging heretics are to genuine believers, who are God’s treasure, like spots and blemishes to precious gems.

Furthermore, these false teachers revel in their deceits. They are happy, beside themselves with pleasure, whenever they deceive others. They revel in the fact that they cause others to be deceived.

Verse 14 continues, “Having eyes full of adultery and not ceasing from sin, enticing unstable souls, having a heart practiced in covetousness, children of curse.” These details also describe the false teachers.

FORSAKING THE STRAIGHT WAY

Verse 15 says, “Forsaking the straight way, they have gone astray, following the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness.” The straight way here, as the way of the truth (v. 2) and the way of righteousness (v. 21), is to live an upright life without crookedness or bias, without unrighteousness.

Having gone astray, the false teachers followed the way of Balaam. Balaam was not a false prophet of the Gentiles, but a real prophet. However, Balaam was one who loved the wages of unrighteousness (Num. 22:5, 7; Deut. 23:4; Neh. 13:2; Rev. 2:14).

Verse 16 says, “But had reproof of his own transgression—a dumb beast of burden, speaking with a man’s voice, restrained the madness of the prophet.” This refers to Balaam, who was restrained by a donkey, a beast of burden, speaking with a human voice. This verse says that this miraculous speaking restrained the madness of the prophet. This indicates that the prophet Balaam was mad in his pursuit of money, in his pursuit of the wages of unrighteousness. Therefore, God used the

miraculous speaking of a beast of burden to restrain him.

----- [SECTION 4] -----

SPRINGS WITHOUT WATER AND MISTS DRIVEN BY A STORM

Verse 17 continues, “These are springs without water and mists driven by a storm, for whom the gloom of darkness has been kept.” Here we see that the heretical teachers are dried up. They are springs without water and mists driven by a storm. They are waterless clouds carried along by winds (Jude 12), having nothing of life to meet the need of the thirsty ones.

Peter says that the “gloom of darkness has been kept” for these false teachers. This also refers to God’s governmental dealing and indicates that a particular place has been prepared for them.

In verse 18 Peter says, “For uttering great swelling words of vanity, they entice by fleshly lusts, in sensuality, those who are barely escaping from them who live in error.” The Greek word rendered “sensuality” also means licentiousness, as in verse 2. The word “live” also means to behave, to conduct themselves.

SLAVES OF CORRUPTION

Verse 19 says, “Promising freedom to them, while they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom anyone has been overcome, by this one he has been enslaved.” In this verse the Greek word rendered “corruption” is *phthora* and denotes corruption unto destruction, destruction that comes with corruption, destroying by means of corrupting.

The false teachers promised freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption. They have been overcome by Satan, and now they are enslaved by the one who has overcome them.

ENTANGLED AND OVERCOME

Verse 20 says, “For if having escaped the defilements of the world by the full knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and having again been entangled in these, they are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first.” This verse indicates that, at least to some extent, the false teachers had the full knowledge of Christ. However, they again

became entangled, and therefore the last state became worse for them than the first.

THE WAY OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

In verse 21 Peter goes on to say, “For it were better for them not to have fully known the way of righteousness, than fully knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them.” This means that it would have been better for them if they had not known anything concerning the Lord than to have turned back from the holy commandment delivered to them.

In verse 21 Peter speaks of the way of righteousness. The way of righteousness is to live a life that is right with both God and man. This is another aspect of the way of the truth (v. 2) and the straight way (v. 15). This is the way to live a life according to God’s justice, a way that can take His governmental judgment (vv. 3, 9) for His kingdom of righteousness (Rom. 14:17; Matt. 5:20). Peter in his Epistles stresses both the manner of life and the way of life, because his writings are based on the governmental point of view of God’s administration. In order to fit in with the government of Him who is holy and righteous, God’s people need to live in a manner of life that is holy, pure, good, and excellent (1 Pet. 1:15; 3:16, 2; 2:12; 2 Pet. 3:11), not licentious or vain (2:7; 1 Pet. 1:18), in His straight way of righteousness and truth.

A TRUE PROVERB

Verse 22 concludes, “It has happened to them according to the true proverb: The dog has turned to its own vomit, and the washed sow to wallowing in the mud.” Here Peter is quite strong and uses two kinds of animals, a dog and a sow, to describe the unclean, false teachers. Dogs and sows are unclean animals, according to the ordinances of God’s holiness (Lev. 11:4, 7; Matt. 7:6). Dogs have a habit of eating filthy things. They vomit what they eat and turn to their own vomit to become filthy inwardly. Sows wallow in the mud to make themselves filthy outwardly. The God-denying heretics eventually become like these dirty animals, making themselves filthy both inwardly and outwardly. What serious judgment they deserve according to God’s righteousness in His governmental administration! Because the defilement of the false teachers is very contagious, the believers’ contact with them is prohibited (2 John 9-11).

We have seen that in 2:10-22 Peter exposes the evils of the false teachers and their punishment under God’s judgment. Because the false teachers go after the flesh, indulge in defiling lust, corrupt luxury for pleasure, despise the Lord’s government, and rebel against His authority, in God’s governmental dealing they will be especially kept under punishment for the day of judgment. We have seen that they become like animals without reason, spots and blemishes, Balaam, springs without water and mists driven by a storm, and dogs and sows. Peter is unique in giving us such a description of the evil condition of the false teachers.

DEGRADATION AND APOSTASY

Chapter two of 2 Peter proves that this Epistle was written during the degradation of the church. The church had become degraded through apostasy. Apostasy is a deviation from the right track of God’s truth. This apostasy was the background of this Epistle. Peter’s burden was to inoculate the believers against the poison of apostasy.

The Epistle of 2 Peter was probably written between A.D. 65 and 68, approximately thirty years after the establishment of the church in Jerusalem. During those years, the church became degraded, and apostasy crept in.

The Epistles of 2 and 3 John were also written during a time of apostasy. However, those Epistles were written about a quarter of a century later than 2 Peter, that is, approximately A.D. 90. Thus, five books—2 Timothy, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, and Jude—were written during a time of the church’s degradation in apostasy.

FIGHTING FOR THE DEEPER TRUTHS

It is important for us to realize that the element of apostasy continues today. Because a number of basic truths have been given up, even by those who apparently are fundamental believers, there is the need for us to fight the battle for the truth. At the time of Martin Luther it was necessary to fight regarding justification by faith. It certainly was worthwhile for Luther to fight that battle. But today we need to fight for the deeper truths revealed in the Word of God. We believe not only in all the genuine items held by fundamental Christians, but also in the deeper truths. We definitely believe that the Bible is fully inspired by God word for word. We would

follow the literal translation of 2 Timothy 3:16 to say that all Scripture is God-breathed. We believe that the Lord Jesus is the Son of God. He is true God and true man. We believe in Christ's incarnation and in His death on the cross for our redemption. According to the Scriptures, we believe that the Lord's death was all-inclusive. Through His crucifixion He terminated the old creation, including us with our flesh and our fallen nature. We fully believe in the Lord's resurrection and ascension. We believe that the Lord is now on the throne. But we also believe that He is not limited to the throne, for as the life-giving Spirit He dwells in our spirit. We believe in every aspect of what Christ is and of what He has done, is doing, and will do. We also believe in all that Christ has attained and obtained. Furthermore, according to the Bible, we believe in transformation and in being constituted of the element of God for the rearrangement of our being. We may say that all this is our deeper faith. In a time of apostasy, we believe and testify the full revelation of the pure Word of God.