

EXPOSITORY
SERMONS
AND
MEDITATIONS
in the Scriptures

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MEDITATIONS IN JUDE

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MEDITATIONS on the 1st Letter to TIMOTHY

1 Timothy 2: 8-15 (Part 2)

For Sunday, 1st February 2026

IN the last meditation on verses 8-15 of 1 Timothy we looked at verses 8 to 10. In this meditation we are seeking to understand the instruction to Timothy in the verses that follow from verse 11, which contain the controversial instruction concerning women.

The first thing we need to appreciate is that that Paul is instructing Timothy concerning how he needs to deal with problems he may meet in his ministry. In this case Paul is instructing Timothy as to how he dealt with this problem concerning women. To do this we need to read how Paul met this problem and how it came about. For this understanding we must turn to 1 Corinthians 14: 33ff.

In my NIV bible the translators begin a new paragraph after verse 33, making verse 34 a new issue. There is no such paragraph break in the Greek, the text proceeds without a paragraph break. From verse 33 we can understand that there was a problem of disorder in the church in Corinth. From this we are able to deduce that the verses concerning women that follow show that women were some cause of this disorder. This connection needs to be thought about. It suggests that women were making their presence felt in the fellowship of believers which was causing some disorder. The question this raises is

what was happening. The only reasonable cause of this occurrence concerning women is that women were expressing their new found freedom in Christ in a too prominent way and so causing confusion in the conduct of the fellowship of the church.

To understand this we need to appreciate the role of women in the original creative order, and for this we need to go back to Genesis 1 & 2. This revelation of creation and God's ordering of creation tells us that God created Adam first as unique and above all the other creatures he created. Then we read in Genesis 2: 15 these words 'The Lord God said 'It is not good for man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him'. In dealing with this need in Adam, in man, God brought all the animal creation to Adam for Adam to name each one, and the implication was that perhaps the helper for Adam could be found somewhere else in life that had already been created. The result of this exercise is given us in verse 20b where we read 'But for Adam no suitable helper was found'. The result of this was that God made a new creation, where he caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and then when he was so put to sleep, God took one of the man's ribs, closed the wound, and then formed the woman, Eve, with this part of Adam. Adam speaks of this creation of Eve in the words of verse 23 - This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman', for she was taken out of man. This formed the creation order which we understand as marriage, showing that Eve was of the uniqueness of Adam, and different, as Adam was, from all the rest of creation.

There is no sense in this order of creation that Eve was inferior to Adam, but the fact that she was created as a helper for Adam is very telling. It tells us that Adam was not complete without Eve, and Eve made up this completeness. She was not created above Adam for he was created first, but she was not

ruled at this stage by Adam. The trouble came when Satan came and tempted Eve, and Eve raised herself in a sense above Adam and decided to do something without Adam, and only speaking about it to him after she had made this individual decision. Eve's sin was to raise herself above Adam and act alone. However that fact of what Adam did when Eve offered him the forbidden fruit reveals that there was no superiority of Adam over Eve in the creation order. He should have acted differently when Eve offered the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and acted in obedience to God, but this was also inconceivable because of the creative oneness that existed between him and Eve. Though Eve raised herself above Adam in choosing to act alone, Adam was also guilty when he allowed himself to go along with Eve's action.

What we are able to appreciate from the order of the creation of both Adam and Eve, and the uniqueness of their creation is that in paradise, although Adam was first and Eve second in position, there was no subjection in Eve to Adam, and no subjugation over Eve in the mind of Adam. The terrible sin of disobedience of Eve brought the terrible result, which Adam was also guilty of in receiving the fruit from the hands of Eve. We read of this sentence of death in Genesis chapter 3. Adam's death was seen in that Satan became the ruler and god over Adam and all his progeny; and for Eve the equality she had with Adam before her sin was taken away and Adam became a ruler over her. This penalty of death and its result in human life and society has been made clear in all history, where men have dominated women.

The blessing of redemption is that in Christ, and new birth in him, the condition of paradise has been restored and women emancipated, and a relationship between a man and woman in Christ resulted in that the rule of man has been changed to the position before the fall. The problem Paul was dealing with

seemed to be that women were seeking to realise their new found freedom in a wrong and sinful way. We must leave this hear and to return to in the next meditation.

MEDITATIONS on the 1st Letter to TIMOTHY

1 Timothy 2: 8-15 (Part 3)

For Sunday, 8th February 2026

WE now return to consider this teaching of Paul concerning women in the light of what we have so far learnt. As we do this the first thing we need to appreciate is that, in the words concerning the role of women in the church, Paul is not delivering new doctrine, but seeking to apply the doctrine of creation to the situation in the life of the church in Corinth, where disorder had resulted from the way women were seeking to realise their new found freedom in Christ.

It is plain that Paul was seeing the sin of Eve appearing again in the way women were seeking to realise their new found freedom in Christ. Paul saw clearly that the sin of Eve was surfacing again under the wiles of the devil. So in this he applies the creation order in verse 11. Women were never to act alone and set themselves above men, so Paul speaks of women seeking to understand their new found freedom in Christ quietly in the fellowship of the church and be in full submission to the order of creation established at creation. Adam was created first, and Eve after. The celebrated words of Matthew Henry in his commentary on the creation of Eve, expresses the right way to view the creation of Eve. I quote from memory 'God took a rib out of the side of Adam to make Eve; not out of his head to top him. Not out of his feet to be

trampled upon by him. But out of his side to be equal with him, underneath his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved'.

When we come to verse twelve the traditional way of understanding this is to say that women should not be preachers and teachers in the church, because this would mean that women were seeking to have an authority over men, and so again repeating the sin of Eve. That Paul was seeking apply the doctrine of creation to here between man and women is made clear because he refers the creation situation. This is found in his referring to the situation reported in Genesis, where Eve took the lead which was wrong, being deceived by Satan. He speaks of Adam as not being deceived, which is true, but he still sinned and disobeyed God's command in eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Then Paul refers to the consequence of the fall concerning women, in the fact that because of the sin of Eve, child bearing had become hazardous, which was not reversed by the restoring of the creation order, but speaks of child birth of women in Christ as being under the hand of God for its safety. Paul also makes clear this safety in the hands of God depended on the women being a true believer, and showing this by continuing in faith, love and holiness.

When we here Paul speaking in other parts of his epistles we are able to see that if it means women should not teach or preach in the fellowship of the church, he would be contradicting himself.

Let us go now to 1 Corinthians 11: 2-16. In these verses Paul is again seeking to apply the doctrine of creation concerning the relationship between Adam and Eve at creation, which establishes the creation order between man and women.

He speaks of the praying and prophesying, and how it should be carried out in the life of the church. He tells us how men should pray and prophecy. In this he accepts the fact that both men and women pray and prophecy, but the way they appear in the church to do this is different.

Prophesying is surely nothing less than hearing the word of God in truth revealed in the bible, and declaring that in the congregation. This is what preaching and teaching is all about. Paul recognises here that women have a role in the church to do this, if so called by the Spirit. In the light of this teaching of Paul his words of women keeping silent in church which we are considering in his words to Timothy, cannot be interpreted as meaning women are barred from ministry in the church, but must be seen in keeping women from falling into the sin of Eve.

When we consider praying, women are encouraged to pray out loud in prayer meetings, and encouraged to do this. The words of Paul that women should be silent in his teaching to Timothy, has never been applied to prayer. But if we take the words of Paul's instruction in the verses in Timothy as definitive, then it is would mean that it would not be permissible for women to pray out loud in a prayer meeting when men are present. There are other places where it is plain that Paul accepted women's ministry within the church. He commends Phoebe specially to the church in Rome revealing that he was commending her ministry. He calls Priscilla as a fellow worker with himself (see Romans 16).

It is evident to me that women's ministry to teach and preach in the congregation of the church is approved in the church, and that the words concerning women here in 1 Timothy was simply dealing with a matter of discipline, where women were wrongly expressing their new found freedom in Christ. It is a ploy of Satan to promote cultural conditioning to pervert the truth concerning life in the church.

MEDITATIONS on the 1st Letter to TIMOTHY

1 Timothy 3: 1-13 (Part 1)

For Sunday, 15th February 2026

IN these verses Paul speaks and teaches concerning the ministry of the growing church. He speaks of two orders of ministry. One is called 'episcopos' translated 'bishop' or 'overseer'. The second is 'diakonos' translated as 'deacon', who seems to be a helper in the ministry.

The bishop or overseer seems to be one who replaced the ministry of the apostles in the care of the churches. The apostles were unique, ordained and called by Jesus Christ for the forming and nurture of the church at the very beginning, an order of ministry with a unique ministry which included the inspiration of the New Testament Scriptures, and an order never to be repeated. We read of Paul ordaining elders to care for the new founded churches, founded by the Holy Spirit through the preaching of Paul. It is these carers of the newly founded congregations which seem to be the order of 'episcopos' bishop or overseer.

The order of 'diakonos' deacon came into being through the burden of care in the early church as the numbers of the church grew so rapidly. In Acts 6: 1ff we see that seven men, called deacons, were called to ministry in the church to free the apostles from the burdens of administration and caring as the church grew. By this means the apostles were freed to concentrate on preaching and teaching. However it is plain from the Acts record of the deacons Stephen and Philip that the order of deacon began to extend to the ministry of teaching and evangelism also.

Then we have in verse 11 something mentioned as 'gunaikos'. This the same word used by Paul in verse 2 concerning overseers. However this is dropped into his teaching concerning ministry in the church. The Greek word is not found in the Greek writers of the New Testament period, and seems unique to the New Testament. The word comes from 'gune' translated female or woman. It is dropped into the teaching of the apostle concerning the order of deacons. Because of this the NIV refers to them as wives of the deacon, but this is completely different to how Paul speaks of the wives of the overseers or bishop. This suggests that Paul is speaking of what has become known in the church as deaconesses, having a ministry similar to that of the deacons. This is why 1 Timothy 3: 11 has been recognised as speaking of some order in the church for women, known as deaconesses.

As we consider this teaching of Paul concerning the ministry in the church we can not help noticing how this simplicity in the early church has developed over time into something remarkably different. We see this specially in the Roman Catholic church, and also in the various forms of episcopal churches; like the Anglican churches, where the order of ministry is Bishops, priests or presbyters, and deacons. In the Anglican ministry there has developed over time an understanding of 'priests' similar to Rome, which was not the order of ministry after the Reformation, which turned in revolt against the idea of priesthood as it was and had developed in the catholic and mediaeval church.

It is plain that in this teaching of Paul here in 1 Timothy any idea of a ministry of priesthood is totally absent and rejected. To every thoughtful reader of the Bible it is plain that altars for sacrifice and priests to offer sacrifices for the atonement of sin, passed away as never needed again, because Christ, as our perfect and all-sufficient priest, has finished with sacrifice for

sin, having made the one all-sufficient and full sacrifice for sin as the Lamb of God offered for the sins of the world on the altar of Calvary.

All other denominations breaking away from the Church of England have sought to have a more simple ministry, more in tune with the teaching of Paul here in his Pastoral letters, but over time these forms of ministry also have developed from the simplicity we find here in 1 Timothy 3.

As we assess these forms of ministry which have developed over time, we can not fail to appreciate that the Roman Catholic church has formed a ministry totally opposed to the teaching of the New Testament and must be accounted an apostate church, and not a church of Christ in any way whatsoever. The order in the Anglican churches, as formed at the Reformation, sought to deal with the way the church has developed over time, by appointing Bishops to supervise a large number of churches, with Presbyters being the minister in the various churches and parishes within an area called a diocese. When this order is kept in a biblical foundation there seems no reason not accept it as a true expression of the simplicity found here in Paul's teaching. However it never should set itself up as better than any other form of church government and organisation, and can not be said to be better or more true to Scripture than any other form of church government and life which has grown up over time, due to the many corruptions that the devil has introduced into the visible church.

With this rather imperfect introduction to these verses in 1 Timothy chapter 3, we must leave these verses for their explanation for further meditations.

MEDITATIONS on the 1st Letter to TIMOTHY

1 Timothy 3: 1-13 (Part 2)

For Sunday, 22nd February 2026

LET us now look more closely at the teaching of the apostle Peter expressed in these verses 1-13 of chapter three of 2 Peter, concerning the ministry of the church.

The first thing that must capture our attention in verse 1 is the word trustworthy. Peter speaks of his teaching on the ministry as a trustworthy saying. When we look back at 1 Timothy 1: 15 Peter uses the same expression of words, but adds to them by saying that a trustworthy saying is worthy of full acceptance. In this first chapter the trustworthy saying is concerning the truth and simplicity of the Gospel, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. Using the same expression concerning his teaching of the ministry of the church shows that Peter sees the ministry, rightly understood, as exceedingly important for the well-being of the church, and faithfulness to the Gospel of salvation. If the ministry becomes corrupted, the proclamation of the Gospel is corrupted.

Peter's affirmation of the importance of his teaching concerning the ministry of the church, is seen to be worthy of full acceptance, because the devil has so infiltrated the thinking and understanding of the ministry in the church over time, that it has corrupted the Gospel, and produced ministry which allows Satan to lead people astray, and down the broad way that leads to destruction.

Peter continues his teaching on the ministry by referring to it as a noble task. Peter's words are 'If anyone sets his heart on being and overseer, he desires a noble task'. These words can

surely be applied to the ministry of deacons, and also deaconesses.

The ministry is maintained by God and our Lord Jesus Christ, so these words of Peter that one who set his heart on being an overseer must be seen in the context of a divine call to the ministry. It is possible, and this has been evident in the history of the church, that people have sought to be ministers for the wrong reasons and without a divine call. One of Satan's most successful ploys is that he has been successful in people desiring the ministry of the church for the wrong reasons, and so have been used by Satan to introduce errors into the doctrine of the Church, and causing people to depart from the truth, and destroying souls by departing from the pure truth of God's word, the Bible.

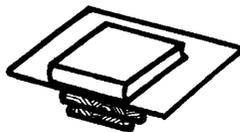
However, when Peter says that to desire to be an overseer is desiring a noble task, he is expressing a very profound truth. What could be more noble than being employed by God to proclaim the good news of the Gospel of how we sinners may be saved and receive the gift of eternal life. There are many and various employments and activities that may be embraced in life that can be maintained as noble, but none so noble as being used by the Holy Spirit for the salvation of souls. There have been many great people, having done much excellent things for the betterment of humanity, but these only pertain to this short life on earth and in time. The true minister, called by God for the ministry, have the most noble purpose, because it goes beyond time into eternity.

As we look at the numerous qualities which Peter says are essential for the ministry of the church, they can all be appreciated as necessary and wholly desirable for the ministry, and do not need explanation. However there are certain facets which need further consideration. The first is with regard to marriage and holiness of life. When we hear Peter saying that

a minister of Christ should be beyond reproach both in the society of the church fellowship but also in society as a whole, we have to agree that this is essential, but Peter goes on to enlarge on the meaning of being beyond reproach.

The first area which Peter mentions is the life of marriage. Peter tells us that the overseer must be the husband of one wife. Having more than one wife was very common in the Old Testament, but in the New Testament makes clear that polygamy is not right. This is recognised in society today, and it is a crime to be living with two wives. But this point about marriage which Peter speaks of here deals in the broadest sense in the sanctity of marriage, and the what is a true marriage relationship. It speaks of the total wrongness of adultery and fornication. It also has reference to the relationship of a man and woman in marriage. A couple may remain in the marriage relationship, when the first love has declined. A husband is not being a husband simply by only providing the material things of life. Nor is he being faithful to his wife when he selfishly pursues his own agenda. Similarly a wife can be faithful to her husband, and run the home efficiently, but without true love and affection for her husband. She may be faithful in this way when love has evaporated and she may even despise her husband. All these considerations are bound up in the words of Peter declaring a minister must be a husband of but one wife.

We must now leave our meditation on the teaching of Peter concerning the living, life and ministry of the overseer to be continued in the next meditation.



GOD'S WORD FROM HOSEA

Number 28

THE RELEVANCE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

“(v.1)Put the trumpet to your lips! An eagle is over the house of the Lord because the people have broken my covenant and rebelled against my law.”

Hosea 8: 1

AS we come now to study chapter 8 of Hosea, and having read through the whole chapter, the relevance of the Old Testament for us today is made clear. An opinion has grown up in much of the visible church that the Old Testament has no relevance for the church now, and that its only value is historical. However humanity and the church seems to never change, and this condition in Israel being addressed by Hosea, being given to Hosea under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is mirrored in the visible church today.

When the ten tribes of Israel separated from Judah and Benjamin under Jereboam 1, in the reign of Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, reigning following Solomon, the ten tribes of Israel asked Rehoboam for mitigate the heavy taxes imposed by Solomon at the end of his reign. Rehoboam took the advice of the young men contemporary with him and rejected the advice of the older men who recommended some mitigation. Because of this Jereboam 1 led the ten

tribes in separate from Judah and Benjamin. This occurred when Rehoboam refused to alleviate the taxes, and rather imposed greater tax. In response to this action of Rehoboam, Jereboam led the ten tribes in revolt from Rehoboam, and separated the kingdom of Israel from Judah and Benjamin. This history is found in 1 Kings 12.

The ten tribes took with them the order of worship laid down by God through Moses, but to prevent Israelites from returning to Jerusalem to worship, Jereboam created two golden calves for worship in the northern kingdom to prevent this. In this action the Israelites continued the worship of God in the northern kingdom, but worshipped before these golden calves.

Verse 2 expresses this action and attitude. Israel claimed to be worshipping Jehovah when they went before these two golden calves. In verses 3 Hosea expresses the truth about this action. God declares through Hosea that Israel had rejected what was good. The verses that follow express God's disapproval of the this action. They speak of his anger against this seeking to worship him before these idols.

srael was seeking to continue worship of Jehovah, but they had added these idols into the action, and so they had added to the worship of God falseness, which incurred God's anger and disapproval, together with judgement which resulted in failure and disaster in the life of Israel.

Surely this is a mirror of what has happened down the ages in the visible church, which has caused God's displeasure, and this has initially caused God to withdraw his blessings, and the spiritual life of the church has been infected by spiritual death, and the church has become impotent, and lacking in blessing.

This is very evident in the life of the visible church in the present. The pattern is found clearly in the life of the Roman Catholic church, where the creeds are still affirmed, but many additions have been brought into the church that make the creeds of no effect. The same syndrome is found in Anglicanism, and in a different way in all the other denominations. Human reason has exalted itself above the authority of the Bible, and the result is seen in the withdrawing of God's blessing, and the church finds itself impotent to face the difficulties of our modern times. People seem to find no relevance in the church, and congregations have diminished. There is also evidence of God's displeasure in judgement, but this is rejected by sinful human reason.

Hosea enlightens us to this syndrome in this chapter. The result of Israel's action of seeking to worship Jehovah through idols, and the consequence of this, is mirrored in a different way in the life of the visible church today. The tragedy is that, as Israel refused to heed the inspired words of Hosea, the visible church refuses to heed or believe the inspired words of the Bible.

Let us now look closely at verse 1 of this eighth chapter of Hosea to see how Israel fared as they sought to worship God through the idols of the golden calves raised up by Jereboam 1.

This verse commences with the words 'Put the trumpet to your lips!'. The trumpet is seen in Scripture as an instrument of warning. Usually, as is evident here, it expressed warning of the reaction of God to departure from his will, and of introducing error into the life which God requires for his people. There are indications of this in other Scripture. This warning is expressed in the next sentence

where Hosea's warning declares the nature of the warning with the words 'An eagle is over the house of the Lord'.

We can turn to Deuteronomy chapter 28: 49, which opens up the meaning of this warning. This verse in Deuteronomy reads as follows - 'The Lord will bring a nation against you from far away, from the ends of the earth, like an eagle swooping down . . . - which reveals divine truth, which is totally rejected and denied in the church today, and which was also not heeded by Israel in the days of Hosea.

What is revealed to us here? In the first place it warns the church - Israel, with Judah, was the church in the Old Testament - that God does not treat departure from his Holy Word lightly, but reacts with horror and disapproval.

It also shows us that such action of departure from his will and word in judgement, brings a reaction from God of judgement.

It warns us that God is sovereign over all his creation, and when the church, on which he has showered mercy and blessing, departs from his purpose and will, his displeasure is shown in action of judgement and punishment.

How Israel ignored this fact, and how the church today reacts against it. It is ever the lie of Satan to bring such a reaction. This was so in the garden of Eden at creation. God gave to our first parents the great blessing of paradise in Eden, where they had everything that delighted their senses, and gave them total satisfaction of life. Together with this God drew near to Adam and Eve in fellowship, and his presence walking with them in the cool of the day. At that time God declared one prohibition and condition for this blessing to continue. Adam and Eve were prohibited from eating the fruit of one tree in the garden - the tree of

the knowledge of good and evil. The prohibition was not hard, or limiting any of the blessing God showered on our first parents, and was in love to preserve the blessing which would be destroyed by disobedience. So disobedience came with a promise, that if they disobeyed it they would die. This is not the place to expound what was involved in this death, but the history of the world makes plain its awful effect.

Satan came, in his power and subtly, and told his lies. He came first to Eve because he knew that his lie would have more power over her. She believed the lie that God would not punish, but was depriving her and Adam of greater blessing. Adam followed her lead, and the result we know. God abided by his judgement of death, and as we all know by experience, the effect of this death has been and is rampant ever since.

God's wrath against transgression from his revealed will is a fact that is plain in the history of Israel. This was the warning that was given to Israel through Hosea. This fact of God's wrath against departure from his truth and holy will is real today, but like Israel, the visible church, according to its wisdom, believes the lies of Satan, and the result is that God has reacted in judgement against the visible church today.

In this first verse of Hosea 8 we read the result of Israel's action. The result is expressed in the rest of the verse - 'because the people have broken my covenant and rebelled against my law'. The judgement of God, which Hosea gives warning of in the first part of this verse, was visited upon Israel. It was seen in the fact that God allowed the nations around to fight against them and afflict them. The blessing Israel knew when they were faithful to God, was removed, and the affliction was the result. Israel found themselves impotent to live safely when God withdrew his blessing. They used their own wisdom to solve their need, and turned

to other worldly powers for help. Not only did they find that these powers failed them, but even turned against them. They had sought to resolve their difficulties by human wisdom, and this completely failed them.

If we now see the relevance of all this revelation through Hosea for the church in the present. It is warning to the visible church the result of going away from the truth of the word of God to believe the manipulation of human reason by Satan to depart and reject much of God's word. This has plainly revealed the weakness and impotence of human wisdom, which has brought the same lack of blessing in the visible church today as it did in the history of Israel. This expresses that truth that God's wrath and displeasure has fallen on the church, and this is shown in the way the church has received little if any blessing from God, but rather withdrawal of blessing, seen in the problems of impotence in the church, and the dwindling of interest in the church in society.

In the history of Israel and Judah there were further consequences of departing from the Lord, and embracing human wisdom, following the desires of fallen human wisdom. When Israel refused to listen to the words of the prophets God sent to warn Israel and Judah of their sinful action in refusing the warnings of the prophets, God took further action.

God still acted in love, mercy and grace. He was patient, sending even more warnings by other prophets, but when Israel consistently refused to listen, God acted in judgement. In the reign of the last king of Israel, Hoshea (2 Kings 17), God's patience ended, and final judgement resulted. Israel was overrun by the king of Assyria. Israel as a nation ceased, and the people carried off into final exile. This was followed by the king of Assyria imported a new

heathen population into the territory of Israel in order to prevent any resurrection of the nation.

This was caused by the hand of God of punishment and judgement on Israel when the nation refused to heed the warnings of the prophets, and God's continual call to Israel to return in faithfulness to the Lord.

The reality of God's judgement and punishment on rebellion and sin is shown. God is sovereign over all the powers and wisdom of men. In grace he gives the promises of grace and forgiveness when there is genuine repentance, but his wrath is being revealed all the time from heaven against all the godlessness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness. (Romans 1: 18).

The awful power of Satan is shown clearly that even then human reason and wisdom does not learn or heed the evidence of God in his action in the world. Israel never learnt, and even Judah failed to learn, because even though God never reneged on his promised to provide a Saviour, still Judah face the punishment of exile for 70 years. Judah was carried into exile in Babylon until, according to his promise God brought them back in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah.

This sermon has been an attempt to show how the pattern of worldliness in Israel is seen repeated in the visible church down the ages and in the visible church today, and to affirm the relevance of the Old Testament Scriptures for all time. But we need to address what has followed in the visible church, and the reason for it.

The relevance of the Old Testament has been further rejected because of the human reasoning. This reasoning argues that God is a God of love, and the threatening of

judgement and punishment on people who act against the revealed purpose of God is incompatible with the truth that God is love. This reasoning is very powerful in its effect, and needs to be addressed.

The first thing that needs to be stressed to open the falseness of this statement, is the fact that the wrath of God against sin and rebellion from his revealed word is just as strong in the New Testament as in the Old Testament. We have quoted the words of the apostle Paul, above, in Romans 1: 18, that the wrath of God is revealed against all godlessness and unrighteousness of men, which is affirmed continually in other parts of the New Testament. This specially evident in the words of Jesus, specially in his teaching against the Pharisees, in made clear in Matthew 25: 46 where he speaks of the condition of the wicked and the righteous. 'Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life'. In the context the ones who Jesus says will go at last to eternal punishment are all those who in any way live according to their own reasoning and not according to the revealed truth of God.

Then further the Bible makes clear that God must remain faithful to his character. Scripture reveals this clearly when it speaks of God being holy. God is unable to go against his holiness, and so it is impossible for him to overlook sin and rebellion in the life of human beings. Fallen and sinful human beings can easily forgive and overlook sin and evil, and so their expression of love is faulty because God is unable to overlook behaviour which transgresses his holiness. God is unable to love at the expense of his holy character.

This reveals the superficiality of the love expressed by human wisdom. The incredible love of God is seen that he

upheld his holiness at the same time showing amazing love. This is expressed in John 3: 16 where we read 'God so loved the world that he gave his one and only, Son our Lord Jesus Christ, that whosoever believes in him will not perish but have everlasting life. The perish expresses everlasting punishment in hell the full and everlasting punishment for sin and rebellion against God and his holy will. The amazing love of God is seen that he gave our Lord Jesus Christ, to become a representative for sinful human beings, the second Adam, and then on behalf of all who believe on him as their Saviour, Jesus suffered the complete and holy demands of God's holiness, by living a holy life in the place of sinners, and then giving himself to suffer all the justice of God's holiness in suffering all the punishment for sin God's holiness demands in the place of all who believe on him as their sin-bearer and Saviour. Here is real sacrificial and effective love, which sinful human reason knows nothing about, and is impotent to understand.

FEBRUARY 2026

GOD'S MESSAGE IN 2 PETER

Expository Sermons in the 2nd Epistle of Peter

WHOLESOME THINKING

"(v.1)Dear friends, this is now my second letter to you. I have written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking. (v.2)I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Saviour through your apostles."

2 Peter 3: 1-2

PETER has been dealing with false teaching which had crept into the church through the malice of Satan. Satan is continually seeking to destroy the faith of believers, and to corrupt the teaching and witness of the true church. In the whole of chapter 2 of this second letter Peter has been vigorously exposing false teaching and exposing the destruction which this causes in the church, and in believers who are caught by this evil activity of Satan. Now, in these two opening verses of chapter three he speaks of wholesome thinking which protects the soul.

Peter was ever a faithful and carrying apostle and pastor, and in the opening of this chapter tells us that both of his letters were written to remind and stimulate believers to wholesome thinking. Satan is ever seeking to destroy souls. He achieves this by assaulting the mind and our thinking with lies. Even in the early days of the church when the Holy Spirit was being poured out in light and blessing, this work of the devil had become virulent. All down history Satan has worked, and it has only been through the reviving work of the Spirit of God that truth has been maintained. Even in the present his work his flooding the visible church with false doctrine and error, and causing the thinking of the world to flood the church.

Peter, as a good pastor, as was Paul and John, seeks to tell us where right and wholesome thinking can be found and maintained in these first two verses of his closing chapter of his 2nd letter.

Where is it to be found? It is found always and forever in the Bible. This is the message given by Peter in the opening of chapter 3.

Peter wants us to recall words spoken in the past by the holy prophets. There can be no doubt that Peter is speaking of the Old Testament Scriptures by these words. The Old Testament

was written by the Holy Spirit inspiring the prophets to write the various books of the Old Testament. A great junk of the Old Testament has been written by the prophets. We have what are called the major prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekial and Daniel. Then we have what are called minor prophets like Micah and Hosea, and others. These are divided between those who prophesied before the exile of the people of Israel in Babylon, and those who prophesied after the exile, such as Zechariah, Haggai and Malachi. However this designation of holy prophets also includes all the rest of the Old Testament as given by the inspiration of God. Peter tells us he wants us to recall all these words written in the past, because the whole has been given as God's revelation of his truth.

Peter then goes on to include the whole of the New Testament in the words 'and the command given by our Lord and Saviour through your apostles'. The apostles were with Jesus throughout his earthly ministry. They were witnesses also of his death, resurrection and ascension back into heaven. Also they were give a promise by Jesus that the Holy Spirit would be poured out on them to explain all the truth that they could not understand when Jesus was with them on earth after he had ascended. This promise is found in John 16: 26ff. Like the whole of the Old Testament is included by the designation 'holy prophets', so the whole New Testament is included in the designation 'the command given by our Lord and Saviour through your apostles'.

What Peter is telling us is that the whole of the Bible - Old and New Testaments - are given as revelation of God, and written by inspiration of God to stimulate wholesome thinking. Without such gracious provision there would be no way any of us would be able to know God and his saving truth. All of us are conscious of God in one way or another, and to a greater or lesser degree. We all have an idea of what God is like and what

we would like God to be. We all have been born with a fallen and corrupt human nature. All of us, however intelligent or clever we may be, are totally impotent to know the truth of God. Further all humanity has been born under the dominion of Satan who works continually to corrupt our thinking. In this weakness and impotence God has graciously given his true revelation of himself and his ways in the whole of the Bible, and we need to stimulate wholesome thinking by being submissive to the whole of Scripture. Peter is directing us to this action because he knows how virulent Satan is to corrupt our thinking and keep us in bondage to himself.

In the light of this exhortation of the apostle Peter what should be our response?

In the first place the only way we may be able to recall these writings is to read them, mark, learn and inwardly digest them. The devil has so undermined the authority of Scripture that this action is less and less followed or obeyed. Together with this Satan plants a reluctance in our hearts to engage in the exercise.

Then we find as we read the Scriptures that it is difficult to recall what we read. Further we find so much of what we read hard to understand, and that there is in us a revulsion to areas of the truth, which Satan again seeks to promote. It is also true that when we seek to read the Bible, Satan again does all he can, and so successfully most of the time, to hinder this instruction of the apostle, and introduce other things for us to do to prevent such activity.

In our response to this exhortation of the apostle to recall what we read in the Bible, there is a need to understand the meaning and the teaching, then to receive it as God speaking to us, and finally to obey the truth as it is given to us.

All this presses upon us that our reading and study of the Bible must never be superficially, or performing a duty, but in deep and genuine seeking after God and what he desires us to know. There must be a hunger in our heart for God to draw near to us while we read, and give us understanding, with the conviction of his presence speaking to us. God's promise given in Jeremiah's prophecy is that we those who seek him will find him when they seek him with all their heart.

Satan knows the power of such activity to recall the word of God spoken to us in such reading, and so in every way, and powerfully done, Satan will work to prevent Peter's reminder here to read, mark and inwardly digest the word of God being executed.

Wholesome thinking is thinking of God and what God has revealed and provided for us in the Bible, and so know the life God requires of us, the blessings of grace God promises us, and to receive his blessing of grace by faith and obedience.

What is needed for Peter's exhortation to be effective?

The first and most important thing is to receive the whole of the Bible as God's word written, and as the means God speaks to those who seek him from their hearts. If there is any receiving of the mind of the world concerning the Bible, then God will not draw near to us, nor will we be able to learn the whole of the truth of God. The dreadful and most harmful damage that Satan has achieved in modern times, is the way the Bible is challenged and criticised and we are told that the Bible has errors, wrong thinking, and false views of truth and of God. The gross cleverness of Satan in achieving this has been and is destroying the church, and turning God away from us, and withholding his blessing.

The second is to beseech the Lord to provide for us pastors, teachers, and clergy who are faithful to the whole of the Bible, and also given understanding and incite to a true understanding of what God is saying in the Bible. There is a great famine of such ministers in the church to day, and the trouble is that Satan has so successfully worked to cause people to turn from the truth when it is preached. Even in churches where the minister receives the whole of the Bible as the word of God, there is a lack of preaching and teaching which expounds the whole truth. So many preachers concentrate on favourite texts, and so often fail to expound them in truth, because they have no absorbed to whole counsel of God.

We need to pray and beseech God to grant us again good preaching which expounds the whole truth of God, and who have been granted true understanding of what the Scriptures teach, together with the gift of making the meaning clear, and applying it faithfully and clearly. Without such provision from God the people perish.

This means God must grant men and women of courage and conviction, to stand against all the forces of Satan, and remain faithful when the opposition is powerful.

We must see the harm and sin in rejecting any part of Scripture, and diminishing its authority in anyway. There must be the courage to stand for the authority of the whole Bible even when people may despise us as ignorant and foolish. The way to the truth is to receive all. If we reject any part of God's word we are damaging the truth. Any other attitude departs from the wholesome thinking which Peter presses on us. Unless we receive the whole, our thinking, as Satan pours fuel on such activity, will become sinful thinking and rebellious thinking.

To reject any part of the whole of God's revelation is dangerous and tantamount to defying God. We have only to take seriously many passages and parts of Scripture which speak of such defying of God to appreciate how soul destroying and dangerous it is.

The fact is that no one can know God except as God reveals himself to us. Even before sin entered the world this has been made plain in the awful and disastrous consequences of the disobedience of Adam and Eve. After this terrible history all humanity has become blind, deaf, and corrupt in spiritual matters, and are not, and never have been, wise enough to know God and his truth.

Peter urges us to recall all the truth of God. We all know how difficult such recalling can be, for we forget what we have been taught and read. Because of this limitation, if we are to recall what we have been taught and read, we must be constant in reading the Bible, and not just parts but the whole, for this is the only way to gain wholesome thinking. We must never give up when the going becomes difficult.

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