

EXPOSITORY
SERMONS
AND
MEDITATIONS
in the Scriptures

January 2026

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MEDITATIONS IN JUDE

November 2025

MEDITATIONS on the 1st Letter to TIMOTHY

1 Timothy 2: 3-4

For Sunday, 4th January 2026

AS we come to these next two verses, we must be sure we see and understand them in the context which commences in the previous two verses. Paul urges the practice of prayer for everyone, and specially for all those in authority, because this promotes peaceful and quiet living where the preaching of the Gospel is not hindered, and it is open to people not only to know the truth concerning salvation, but also to believe it unto salvation.

This is what is pleasing to God our Saviour. This phrase is unusual as it speaks of God as Saviour, when we normally speak of Christ as Saviour. However it is an important phrase because it shows us the heart of God, which is reinforced in the next phrase where Paul tells Timothy that God the Saviour wants all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

This heart of God is seen throughout Scripture. At the very beginning when the great tragedy of Adam's sin plunged all humanity under the dominion of Satan, where, since then, Satan is referred to in the New Testament as the god of this world, and all humanity to be under the dominion of Satan, God made the wonderful promise that, the seed of the woman, that is another human being, would be provided who would crush Satan's head,

that is would defeat Satan by providing salvation from Satan's authority and power.

It is clear that this reveals the heart of God as Saviour. It would be a monumental task for people to be delivered from this power and dominion of Satan over humanity, but God the Saviour promised to accomplish this by this promised seed of the woman.

The history of humanity in the Old Testament is a record of how God our Saviour engaged to provide this seed. The world had to wait over 4000 years for this seed, even our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, to appear, but the efficacy of his saving work was known and experienced from the very beginning, in Abel and Seth and Noah and Abraham, and in the children of Israel, and in spite of all the massive power and malice of Satan to prevent the Saviour, Jesus Christ, to be born and achieve salvation, Jesus came and worked and won eternal salvation for all who believe on him as their Saviour and deliverer. The heart of God was to provide salvation for all men in Christ, because his desire was that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.

This heart of God is expressed in the great gospel text in John three and verse 16. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believes in him will not perish with Satan, but be given the blessing of eternal life in God's eternal heaven of blessing.

It is true from this gospel text and the revelation in the Bible as to the efficacy of Christ's saving work, that there is in Christ sufficient salvation for all humanity. The heart of God so loved the world that full salvation has been provided for all men. However the truth about humanity under the dominion of Satan is given in the following verses from John 3: 16 which go on to say that Jesus was sent to save and not to condemn the world, and that whosoever believes on him is not condemned, but whosoever does not believe stands condemned already. Then comes the tragic

statement concerning humanity in verse 19 'This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.'

This reveals the dreadful power of Satan's dominion over humanity. John tells us in chapter 1: 4,5 'In Him, (Christ), was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it'.

The Scriptures go on to reveal that amazing heart of God is this dreadful situation of darkness in humanity produced by Satan. Although salvation is offered freely to all men, and is sufficient to save all men, the light of Christ is not appreciated. So what has God done as Saviour. This is expressed so clearly in the opening of Paul's letter to Titus. Paul speaks in Titus 1: 1 of the faith of God's elect and the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness – a faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life. This statement goes on to tell us that this election was promised before the beginning of time.

The heart of God is seen that God knew about Adam's sin and Satan's victory before time was brought into being at creation, and had already in eternal love chosen those he would eternally deliver from Satan's dominion. Being chosen before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1: 4) we see the heart of God in making the victory of Christ over Satan's dominion sure in these chosen, known to God for such salvation before time, and Christ's saving work made effective, in them, by the eternal power and grace of God.



MEDITATIONS on the 1st Letter to TIMOTHY

1 Timothy 2: 5-6

For Sunday, 11th January 2026

THESE two verses express the great problem that God overcame as Saviour, by giving his one and only beloved Son, as mediator between God and man. They also speak of the way this problem was overcome by the Lord Jesus Christ.

The fact that our Lord Jesus Christ was given by God is made clear in the fact that Jesus Christ was given to be a mediator between God and man. Paul tells Timothy that 'There is one God'. This reminds us of the tremendous truth and reality that God is the infinite and eternal God who is from everlasting to everlasting, and thereby is the source of all creation and life. It expresses the truth that since Adam's disobedience there has been an alienation between everlasting omnipotent God and mankind which he created and gave life and being. Man now exists in Satan's darkness, and is alienated from the life and light of God. This separation of God and man is equivalent to light and darkness. As there can be no communion between light and darkness, so there can be no coming together between God in the light of holiness and man in the darkness of sin and rebellion against God.

This is the great problem which God as Saviour had to deal with. The only way it could be resolved is by the provision of a mediator between the two alienated parties. The mediator had to be able to have a plea before infinite holiness in God which could provide a means that God in his infinite holiness could save man in his sinfulness, corruption and rebellion so that his holiness and justice would remain untarnished and pure.

Infinite holiness cannot overlook sin and rebellion. Sin and rebellion must be punished and put away. The darkness of sin and disobedience, caused by Satan in Adam, must be purged. God in his purity and holiness cannot live with such impurity. Light of God's holiness cannot tolerate the darkness of Satan and his corruption. God as Saviour had to deal with this terrible dilemma and problem. God did it by giving himself, in the person of his one and only well beloved Son.

Only the one infinite almighty God could solve this insolvable problem and that was in giving his Son to be a mediator between God and man, who had a plea to plead which overcame this insoluble problem of man's sin and rebellion.

Paul goes on to declare the way Jesus became the almighty mediator between God and man. This was by God giving his Son as a ransom for all men.

A ransom is the paying of a debt. The ransom which Jesus paid was to meet all the holy just demands of God in holiness in the place of us sinners and debtors to God. God gave his only begotten Son to be the second and victorious representative between God and Adam. Where Adam failed and was defeated, Christ as mediator had to be victorious. He had to come into this world as a man and live a completely holy life, and completely in every way be victorious over all the temptations and seduction of Satan; and then he had to give himself to be punished for all the sin and rebellion of sinful man in our place as our substitute before the holiness and justice of God.

So he bore our sins in his body of the cross, so that the total and complete justice of God against our sin and rebellion could be accomplished, and God's holiness and justice could be upheld and preserved. Jesus did this when he suffered our hell in his death upon the cross, which he expressed on the cross in his cry 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me'.

The resurrection of Jesus was the testimony of God as Saviour, that all his holy justice was met and satisfied by the righteous life and the sacrificial death of his one and only well beloved Son, suffering the humiliation of his incarnation to fulfil all this righteousness of God.

Paul goes on to declare the truth that Jesus is one and only mediator between God and man. There is no other mediator, for Jesus alone was able to meet all the demands of the holiness of God, provide all righteousness which met all the demands of the light that is in God. It was God, as Saviour, who accomplished this by laying on Jesus the iniquity of us all.

Paul goes on to declare that this testimony of salvation was given in the proper time. The proper time was when, after over 4000 years of waiting, God and worked the perfect time for this wondrous salvation to be worked. Jesus came at the one and only perfect time for God to provide his Saviour.

So we see the wonder of the almighty and perfect work and wisdom of God for the salvation of sinners suffering under his holy condemnation.

MEDITATIONS on the 1st Letter to TIMOTHY

1 Timothy 2: 7

For Sunday, 18th January 2026

PAUL has briefly told the message of God the Saviour concerning the provision of salvation from sin, Satan, eternal

death and hell, now in this next verse, verse 7, Paul informs Timothy that God had appointed him to make this salvation known.

Paul speaks of this in the words of verse 7 where he tells Timothy in verse 7 - 'And for this purpose I was appointed a herald and an apostle'.

The gospel of salvation has to be heralded. Unless it is heralded it would have been without purpose, and Jesus would have become incarnate, lived a holy life, and died the death of sinners in vain.

Peter and the other apostles were commissioned as heralds to the Jews, their fellow countrymen, but Paul was commissioned to be the heralds of salvation to the rest of mankind, known in the Bible as Gentiles.

This appointment to be a herald of the Gospel of salvation makes abundantly clear, that this heralding is absolutely essential. This heralding was accomplished by Paul by preaching the word. He makes this clear in his first Corinthian letter where he declares in 1 Corinthians 2: 2 'For I determined to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.' This makes clear that the preaching of the Gospel is the first priority in the church, and is God's approved means by which the gospel of salvation is proclaimed and made known. It also condemns the present attitude in the church of despising preaching.

Further by this appointing Paul as a herald of the gospel, his writings in the New Testament, and all the other writings in the New Testament, are given for this heralding as the means whereby the way of salvation is disseminated. As the Christians were scattered about by the persecution of Christians in Jerusalem, they became heralds of the Gospel throughout the places to which they were scattered.

Authority to the truth of the Gospel also has to be clear. For this Paul tells Timothy that he was also appointed an apostle. It was

for this reason that Paul was given the experience and vision when travelling to persecute Christians in Damascus. Paul not only saw Jesus risen from the dead and reigning in glory, but he was given this appointment by Jesus himself to be a herald and an apostle. Jesus gave Paul his authority as a apostle by this seeing of the risen Christ, for this was the essential credential for the appointment of an apostle and the authority of the apostle.

Because Paul was not one of the original number of the apostles who had been with Jesus throughout his ministry, witnessed his death and resurrection physically Paul knew that doubts could be held concerning this appointment as an apostle and a herald, so Paul adds the confirming words 'I am telling the truth, I am not lying'.

It is a fact that the devil uses every means he can to cause doubts in peoples' minds concerning the authority of the Bible, and the ministry of preaching. Satan has great subtilty in this work to undermine the Gospel. Paul knew that the devil would seek to bring doubts in the mind of Timothy as to Paul's authority as an apostle, so he impresses on the mind of Timothy that he was speaking the truth. By this Timothy would be made confident in his ministry and preaching.

Paul rounds off this ministry of assurance to Timothy in the final words of this seventh verse of 1 Timothy chapter 2. He states the truth in the following words 'and a teacher of the true faith to the Gentiles'. Paul assures Timothy that he was a true teacher and that his teaching was absolutely true to the Gospel he was given to herald.

Such testimony of Paul to the truth of his teaching, not only would have given Timothy assurance to pass on this true teaching, but it also assures us that the writings of Paul in the New Testament, his epistles, are also a faithful proclamation of the truth as it is in Jesus, and which can be accepted as the word of God to every

believer. There is much doubt being cast on the New Testament, and particularly on the writings of the apostle Paul in our modern times, that this word of assurance to Timothy must also be an assurance that we can receive, in their true and natural meaning, all the writings of Paul in the New Testament, and the testimony of Paul the writings of the rest of the New Testament.

Paul was an excellent apostle in the fact he anticipated, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, all the doubts Satan would bring into the mind of Timothy, and this is why he speaks to Timothy with such vehemence to Timothy. In the same way he is speaking to the true people of God down the ages and in the present through the Bible.

MEDITATIONS on the 1st Letter to TIMOTHY

1 Timothy 2: 8-15 (Part 1) For Sunday, 25th January 2026

HAVING established his credentials and authority as a herald and an apostle, Paul goes on to speak about important issues in the church which are important for the attitudes of believers in the society of the church. Included in this is the position of women in the church. This issue has caused controversy within the church, but it need not do so if the teaching of Paul in these verses is understood in their true meaning. As we go through the teaching of Paul in these verses, concerning order and important things in the church, I hope by the aid of the Holy Spirit I may be granted that true understanding, and also show that the meaning which is often pressed so firmly is not actually quite what Paul is

saying. If properly understood I believe the controversy evaporates.

What we need to appreciate in these verses before us is the fact that Paul is concerned to address issues in the fellowship of believers which bring confusion into the the mind of believers. This confusion, at the root, is concerned with the cultural condition which afflicts all of us in various degrees. This condition is used as tool by Satan to bring controversy amongst Christ's people, and cause a Pharisaical attitude to creep in to destroy unity, joy and peace into the thinking of the church in almost every direction. Satan succeeds to cause judgementalism and criticism to upset, not only in the church, but also into the hearts of believers.

We come first to verse 8 where Paul tells us he wants men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing. The Greek word here used for men 'andras' is unfamiliar to me, and I am unable to find the word in my Greek Lexicon which demonstrates my limited knowledge of New Testament Greek, and here is my first difficulty. The usual word used for men is a generic term including men and women. In these verses before us Paul seems to speak first to men, and then to women. With this in mind I do not understand why Paul singles out men particularly to pray, when prayer is open for all believers, both male and female. However the instruction to pray is so important, for it is at the heart of new life in Christ. When Paul was converted, Ananias, who was sent by the Holy Spirit to give Paul back his sight, was given the evidence that he was now a believer and chosen by God with the words 'Behold, he prays'.

With this in mind the only understanding that comes to me concerning this special instruction here for men to pray is that what Paul is going to instruct concerning women and their place in the church needs special understanding, so prayer must be offered in holiness, (lifting holy hands), and without anger or disputing. It is a fact that what Paul is going to say concerning

women has caused, and is causing, great anger and disputing in the church. For this reason it appears to me that Paul is instructing men to specially pray concerning a right understanding of his instructions concerning women. If there is any greater need in the church than this, it is concerned with a right understanding of Paul's teaching concerning women, both here and in other places in his epistles.

Verses 9 to 13 of these verses before us speak of Paul's instruction concerning women in the church. Paul commences in verse 9 with instruction to believing women concerning the way they dress. Presumably he commences with this instruction to women, because there can be no controversy about this instruction.

It is right for women to dress modestly, and with decency and propriety. True humility requires that believing people should not draw attention to themselves in pride of appearance, but rather to avoid such promotion for attention in society. In the case of women this is particularly important. A woman's appearance has a powerful influence on men, and can be used by Satan to cause not only thoughts which Jesus particularly speaks of in the sermon on the mount, when he speaks of men committing adultery in their hearts. And if this is not all, such thoughts can lead men astray in a more open way.

As this is true, the instruction to believing women to dress modestly is so important. No believer should behave in a way that may do harm to another believer. Jesus also mentions the inappropriate dressing of women to gain attention and praise in society. Because of this he instructs believing women to dress in such a way as to not intentionally draw attention to themselves. Humility is a Christian virtue. However this does not mean women should dress unbecomingly and dowdily. Every believer is meant to behave, in dress as well as behaviour, in a way that commends Christian living, and not to cause people to despise Christians.

The next verses from 11 to 13 are the ones which we have to understand in the right way, and for this reason it will be necessary to see them in the context of a much wider biblical understanding of the purpose of God in creation, and the perversion which has been caused by the fall of mankind, and how we are all born initially because we have been born dead in trespasses and sins.

GOD'S WORD FROM HOSEA

Number 27

THE LORD'S COMPLAINT, DIAGNOSIS & ACTION

“(11) Ephraim is like dove, easily deceived and senseless - now calling to Egypt, now turning to Assyria. (12) When they go, I will throw my net over them; I will pull them down like birds in the air. When I hear them flocking together, I will catch them. (13) Woe to them, because they have strayed from me! Destruction to them, because they have rebelled against me! I long to redeem them but they speak lies against me. (14) They do not cry to me from their hearts but wail upon their beds. They gather together for grain and new wine but turn away from me. (15) I trained them and strengthened them, but they plot evil against me. (16) They do not turn to the Most High; they are like faulty bow. Their leaders will fall by the sword because of their insolent words. For this they will be ridiculed in the land of Egypt.”

Hosea 7: 11-16

THERE is no doubt, as we read these verses, that God longed to love and bless Israel, referred to by Hosea as Ephraim. In verse 13 we hear God saying how he longed to redeem them. This yearning from God is behind all the action of God against Israel. The problem was that Israel in its folly, was weak and easily led, and sought the help of the heathen rather than God. It is strange that Hosea likens Israel to a dove. We read that the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus at his baptism like a dove. However here Hosea sees Israel easily deceived and senseless, that is easily deceived and led astray, which was the case. Like Adam and Eve were deceived by the devil into believing his lie that God was depriving them of something better than which God had given them, so Israel, in the way Satan deceives all humanity, made Israel feel that Egypt and Assyria could help them better than God could help them. It all boils down to believing that the satisfaction of bodily desires was the way to happiness and satisfaction.

As God looks and observes the behaviour of Ephraim we can see these three things. Firstly, God's complaint against Israel. Secondly, God's diagnosis of the condition in Israel. Thirdly, his action against Israel. When we see this action we may begin to feel God had little or no love for his people, but this is not the case. All God's action were for saving, holding back, Israel, so that they did not completely ruin their lives by total apostasy.

GOD'S COMPLAINT.

This complaint is first express in verse 13. 'They have stray from me'. This complaint is introduced by the words 'Woe to them'. God saw that this straying away from him was only going to bring disaster. The Woe of God is God expressing and making clear how in straying away from God would bring them neither joy or blessing. God had in the past poured out blessing on Israel. He had given them a land flowing with milk and honey. He had promised that if they remained faithful to him

these temporal blessing would continue, and he would defend them from the ravages from the heathen nations around them. In the time of Joshua this blessing was so evident, and only ceased when there was sin of disobedience in Israel. In the time of the Judges, whenever Israel returned in repentance and faith to the Lord, he gave judges and deliverers to save them and bring back his blessing. However from the time when Israel, the ten tribes in the northern kingdom, split away from Judah and Benjamin this complaint from God is recorded - Israel strayed away from the Lord, and was blind to see that in doing this, and seeking to satisfy the longings of the flesh, they were destroying their happiness.

The next expression of complaint given by God is also in verse 13, where he says they rebelled against me! Rebellion is a deliberate action of forsaking God and his gracious rule, in order to indulge the pleasure of the flesh they saw in the heathen and their gods. The rebellion was rank turning away from the first and most important command of God, to have no other gods but Him. It is seeing this rebellion that God tells Ephraim that he longed to redeem them, but this loving good will of God to Israel was rejected for what they thought would bring them greater happiness.

Then, also in verse 13 God complains of an even worse attitude in Israel. They tried to defend their rebellion by seeking to blacken the name of God. Satan sought to blacken the name of God to Adam and Eve, by suggesting that God was withholding from them a greater joy. Satan is always doing this as he suggest that freedom from God to do their own thing would prove a greater joy and blessing than serving the Lord faithfully.

GOD'S DIAGNOSIS.

How searching are God's words through Hosea in these verses before us! There are three things which make up this diagnosis. In the first place in verse 11 God says that they were easily deceived and senseless. In the second place in verse 14 God says they do not cry out to me from their hearts. In the third place in verse 16 - they do not turn to the Most High. Let us look at these three things in turn by which God diagnoses the problem and sickness in Ephraim.

a. They are easily deceived and senseless.

This is the problem caused because human nature is fallen and sinful. Satan has always been a master of deception. As he deceived Adam and Eve he deceives with ease fallen human nature. Though God had poured out on Ephraim numberless blessings, in their own wisdom they were easily deceived and senseless.

The godless nations all around Israel were afflicting them, so their senseless human reason made them turn to other godless nations for help. Israel saw both Egypt and Assyria as powerful nations, and they believed if they could gain their support, they would be able to overcome and put down the lesser powerful nations who were afflicting them. This is an example of the thinking of human wisdom.

If Israel had remembered God's almighty power in their defence and blessing in the past, they would have been able to appreciate how senseless was this looking for help in their affliction from other godless nations. If they had remembered God's blessing in the past they would have been avoid this deception and returned to God in repentance, and pleaded for God to return with his blessing. This would never have failed because God longed to redeem them.

If Israel had not been senseless of the truth concerning God's blessing in the past they would not have been deceived into believing that godless human help was their best option.

The troubles with Israel and which is always true is Israel wanted to continue in their godless ways, because they wanted to keep the ways of the heathen that God condemned.

Can this happen in the church today? A number of years back the diocese of Worcester suffered a loss in their accounts of over a million pounds. Various meetings were arranged where this problem could be addressed. In fact the purpose of these meetings was not to search out why God had allowed his church to suffer this loss. By human wisdom and reason the diocese had decided what they were going to do. It was to close churches, reduce the number of clergy, and cut back as far as they could on expenditure. These measures all seemed the way forward to address this deficit, and using human reasoning it appeared to be the only and the right way to go ahead. The meetings were simply in nature of damage limitation exercises to get every one on board. However several years later it may well be asked if it has solved the problem? Certainly these measures have been applied quite rigorously, but whether it has balanced the books at the diocese, I just do not know. Perhaps this way of addressing the problem of the financial crisis seemed the only way to address the problem, and humanly speaking one has to say it was. However, the question why God had allowed this financial problem to occur in the first place was never addressed. It seems to me that the diagnosis of the problem which God makes clear in Israel in the time of Hosea, that they were easily deceived and senseless, has something that addresses this problem in the present.

b. They do not cry out to me from their hearts.

This diagnosis is declared by God in verse 14. What does this diagnosis from God reveal to us. Israel, instead of coming to God in heartfelt prayer, asking him why they were so afflicted by the nations all around them, acted according to their own human reason and wisdom.

What does this diagnosis suggest to us as to what Israel should have done? Surely that they should have come supplicating before God for the reason why he had allowed them to be afflicted, and earnestly asking him to make clear why he had allowed them to suffer.

If we ask why they had not come to God from their hearts, there can be no other answer than that they wanted to continue in the ways of the heathen around them, and to satisfy the the sinful human desires of their hearts. It is only when by the Holy Spirit such conviction takes place that there is any turning to God from the heart. Protestation in words of repentance have no value. What God takes regard of is what is in the heart. If the heart is wrong then there will be no genuine calling upon God from the heart.

c. They do not return to the Most High.

This diagnosis is found in verse 16. It declares the truth about Israel. If they returned to the Most High, they would have to renounce they ways the delighted to live, which they saw in the ways of the heathen all around them.

This the bottom line when we seek to appreciate why God's blessing is missing in the life of the church. If the hearts is wrong – if the heart desires the ways and wisdom of the world, then there will be no returning to the Most High.

If this is the condition of the heart of God's people then there can be no blessing from God

GOD'S ACTION.

We have this action expressed in verse 12 where God says 'When they go (to Egypt & Assyria), I will throw my net over them; I will pull them down like birds in the air. Then again in verse 13 'Woe to them . . . Destruction to them because they have rebelled against me'. Then again in verse 16 'Their leaders will fall by the sword because of their insolent words. For they will be ridiculed in the land of Egypt'.

How do you see this action of God. There is no doubt that it is punitive action, bringing God's punishing hand upon them, and so upsetting their action of going to Egypt and Assyria, rather than to him. Do we see this action as a rejection of Ephraim, as God reeking judgement in anger upon Israel? And feel that God is a God of wrath and punishment and casting people into punitive pain, and seeing this action of God in this way, and so turning away from God. Surely this is the attitude taken by many in the visible church to these demonstrations of judgement which we hear Hosea recording in these verses, and in the light of this turning away from such a revelation of God as horrible, and rejecting such revelation as unworthy of a God of love.

However if we meditate more deeply into this action of God surely we see in this action of God towards Ephraim an action of deep love. If we take note of the words in verse 13 where God reveals what is in his heart towards Ephraim - 'I long to redeem them'; surely this action of God in his punitive action promised on Israel must be seen in a different light. Why is God acting in this way to his people, surely he is acting in deep love.

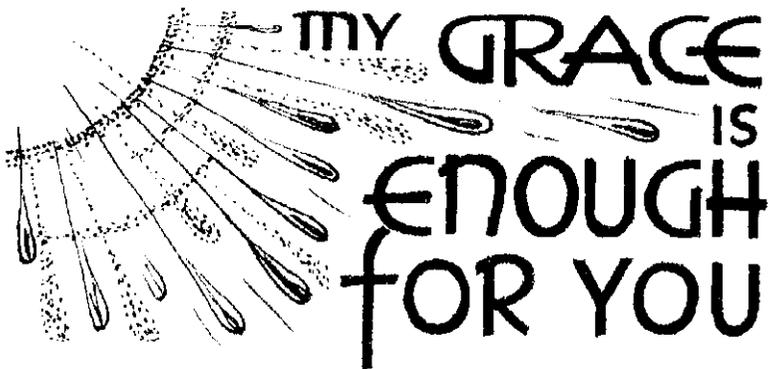
The way Israel was going by turning to human reason, and human desire, to Egypt and Assyria, rather than to God, was the way of loss and turning away from the saving love of God. God reveals himself here as a saving and loving God to Israel,

as he draws them back from their folly, and seeks to bring them back to remember that when they served God from their hearts, they lived in his blessing and protection; and by going after the lusts of the flesh, and trusting their own fallen and corrupt reason, they were in fact on their way to destruction.

Satan is always deceiving people in suggesting that he can give people a happiness that God would deprive them of. But God in love says in Matthew 16: 25-26 'Whoever wants to save his life (soul) will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it. What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul (loses his soul)'.

The lie of Satan is that if we respond to him he will give us the world, and he does; but this life is so short compared with eternity, and the pleasures and riches of this life never wholly satisfy. The more people have in this world, the more they crave after. But when we give our lives to Jesus, he gives life and peace, and holy joy, and in the end eternal life.

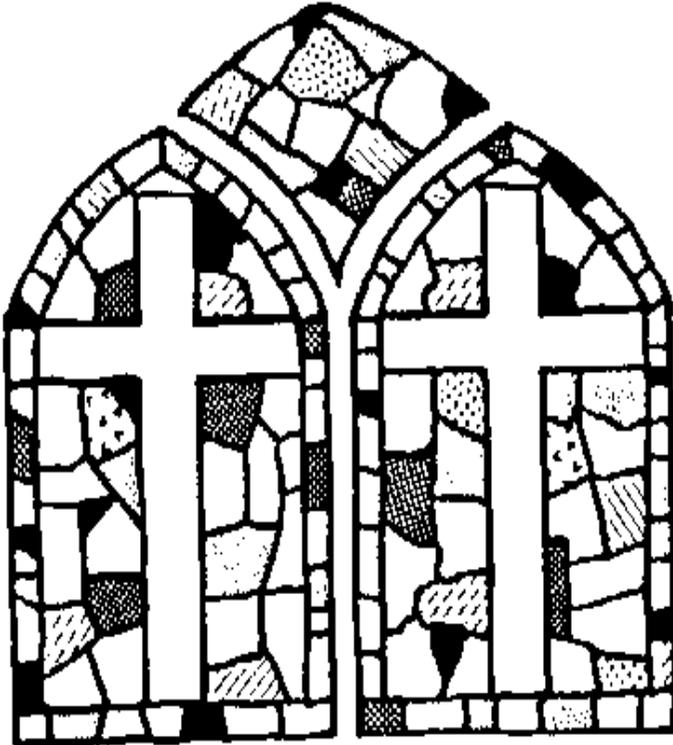
Do we now see how much love there is in this action of God to Israel. All the action is to show the emptiness in the end of the life Satan offers and our fallen nature craves. The action of God to Israel was to make them stop and think that the way of human reason and the flesh, did not bring the satisfaction that



Satan was deceiving them into craving for. All God's action towards Israel that we see in these verses we are considering, were all of a loving and merciful character. If Ephraim had stopped to think, perhaps they would have recollected the blessings and protection they new from God when they were faithful to him. If they had return to faith and trust in God, they would have found grace, forgiveness and blessing.

There is no doubt that we have in this action of God to Israel grace abounding, and love poured out. How Satan and the flesh revolt against this loving hand of God.

January 2026



GOD'S MESSAGE IN 2 PETER

Expository Sermons in the 2nd Epistle of Peter

TRAGEDY OF FALSE WITNESSES

"They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity - for man is a slave to whatever has mastered him. If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning.

It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then to have turned their backs on the sacred command that was passed on them. Of them the proverbs are true; 'A dog returns to his vomit, and, a sow that is washed goes back to her wallowing in the mud.'"

2 Peter 2: 19-22

AS we come to these next four verses that end of chapter 2 of 2 Peter, we are brought face to face with the tragedy of false witnesses. This is why I have entitled this sermon as 'TRAGEDY OF FALSE WITNESSES'. It is a awful tragedy as Peter opens up these last verses of 2 Peter. The author of Hebrews, which I believe was the apostle Paul, speaks of the same tragedy in Hebrews 6: 4-6.

The scenario with which we are presented with, in the case of these false witnesses, which is indicated in verse 20, is that these witnesses had escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. This surely indicates that they had been brought into the salvation through faith which all believers know, but after this they had been infected by error which made obsolete the salvation which all believers have in Christ.

In the days of Peter and Paul these false witnesses, were converted Jews, who had been infected by the error of adding to Christ all the forms of religion of the Jews. They said that believers should still observe all the law of Moses, that is the whole of the worship laid down in the first five books of the Bible. The letter of Paul to the Hebrews makes abundantly clear that Christ has made these forms of worship obsolete, because he, as our high priest, has made once for all, a complete and all-sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the world, making all the multitude of animal sacrifices obsolete. In Galatians 1: 6-10 Paul speaks strongly concerning this teaching, and calls it another false Gospel, which was taking the Galatians from the pure and true doctrine of Christ. He repeats twice that anyone who preaches another gospel than the one he preached was eternally cursed.

In these present days, within the visible church, and specially amongst clergy and minister, there is a terrible invasion of this false witness, though it takes a different form in the unbelief and additions put forward today, but this false witnesses is just as dangerous in the way it destroys precious souls who embrace them. Peter's words concerning false witnesses is just as necessary today as it was in his day.

Let us now turn to these four verses before us and hear clearly what the apostle Peter is saying.

Peter speaks of the teaching of these false witnesses as promising us freedom. These men have been led astray to the erroneous ideas which they honestly believe will offer freedom. Such freedom is not explained, but false witness of any kind which adds or takes away the simplicity of faith in Christ, though they may purport to offers something better than our freedom in the pure faith of Christ, is a false freedom, which enslaves rather than frees. Peter then goes on to speak of these false witnesses, who offer freedom, or anything other than simple faith in Christ as Lord, Saviour and sin-bearer, are really in slavery to depravity.

Depravity here needs to be properly understood. It does not simply speak of depravity as grossly following the lusts of the flesh, but is any thought or practice which exalts pride in human reason above the true wisdom of Christ. In teaching the errors which these false witnesses spoke of, they were showing that they had been taken over by an exalted belief in their own powers of reason, and were able by it to judge the word of God, and felt able to add or reject or water down anything in the Bible that their human fallen reason deemed as not God speaking his truth. In all the false witness within the visible church today, there is no evidence that clergy and ministers are all leading immoral worldly lives, though some may. In fact it is probably true that most clergy are good charitable people, seeking to do much charitable good to the people they minister to. However it is a dreadful depravity where the Bible is simply deemed to contain the word of God, and is not in total the inspired revelation God, which he has given given in his mercy and grace which must be received and believed, in its entirety. In the way the Bible is deemed as simply containing the truth of God, destroys its authority altogether as each person is deemed able to discern the truth himself, and by his reason can reject what his reason disapproves. In this way these false witnesses have become taken over by the depravity promoted by Satan.

Peter goes on to make clear the nature of this depravity. His words are as follows - 'for a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him'. It is characteristic of the false witness in the church today, as it was in Peter's time, that they have supreme confidence in the false witness they promote, and despise as ignorance the truth as it is in Jesus.

In verse 20 Peter goes on to speak of the terrible tragedy of these false witnesses. There is no doubt they firmly believe that their belief and teaching is the truth that places them in the favour of God, and that in life and in death they are safe in God's favour, but

this is tragically not true. Satan has blinded their eyes and their minds, to this that they firmly believe, and it will be a dreadful unveiling for them on the last day, when we all face the Lord Jesus as judge, and find they are cast out as weeds and goats, as two parables of Jesus describe, into outer darkness, where there will be eternally the horrors of Hell. This horror for the false witnesses depresses my soul in these days of my old age.

Peter makes clear this awful tragedy in the following words 'If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and are again entangled in it and overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning'.

Clearly Peter is speaking about those in his day, who had embraced the faith of Jesus Christ, and been saved, but then have been seduced by Satan by the reason of the world, and left the simplicity which in Christ in some way. In Peter's day it was to add the Law of Moses to the Gospel. In our modern times it is seen in subtracting from the simple truth of the Gospel that which their reason, under Satan's influence, deems as untrue.

Peter tells us that they are worse off than they were before they were saved. Surely the thought here is that in some way they have turned away from Christ and despised him, and are living a lie against him.

The words of Peter in verses 21 and 22 are truly awful. He says 'It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then turned their backs on the the sacred command that was passed on them'.

Let us meditate on this now seriously so that we appreciate the dreadful action they have taken. The sacred command which is passed over all who believe is found in the wonderful words of the first verse of Romans 5. This verse declares the glory and wonder of the of God for all who are redeemed and saved. 'Therefore,

since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ'.

As we read the teaching of Paul in Romans he shows us that when we have been given repentance for our sins and by grace to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour, we become in Christ Jesus. As all of humanity is born are under the condemnation of death which Adam made for all his progeny; so through the gift of God's grace to see and believe in Jesus as our sin-bearer and Saviour, we have been translated from the dominion of Satan, and placed in the kingdom of Heaven where Christ is king, so that all that Christ won by his life and death and resurrection and ascension, is imputed to the believer. In Adam we inherit death. In Christ we inherit life eternal, as Paul declare in 1 Corinthians 15: 21-22 'For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive'.

These false witnesses have departed from being in Christ and his dominion and rule, and returned and placed themselves again under the dominion of Satan, the death Adam brought on all humanity, is again their condition.

Peter tells us that it would have been better to have not known the way of righteousness and then turned their back on this wonderful sacred command of God for those who have embraced Christ. They have lost peace with God. They are still in their sins.

In the Hebrews passage which speaks of this condition, they have place themselves in a condition that they were born in, and salvation is lost for ever. It is so terrible a thing to turn away from the truth.

Is such a reneging truly possible? The Scriptures are firm in declaring that if God has truly begun a good work in us, come what may he will continue it unto the day of Jesus Christ, and other

Scripture give the same assurance. It is possible for a born again believer to fall back into the world, and sin grievously, but it is impossible for them to turn from Christ in unbelief. We may lose our assurance that we are safe in Christ for a time, but in such darkness the true believer never ceases to cling to Christ and the truth that we have been taught and has been sealed to us by the Holy Spirit.

Satan can so bring darkness to a believer so that the peace of Christ is almost torn from our minds. But there never is any thought of rejecting the truth in Jesus that has been given us. It is only the assurance and comfort of it that the cloud of Satan's darkness has temporally hidden.

How are we able to understand what Peter is warning us of. Paul's words in Hebrews speak of people just tasting the heavenly gift (Hebrews 6: 4). This suggests to me the words of Jesus in the Parable of the seed of God's word being sown. What these words of Peter suggest to me that he is describing to seed fallen on rocky ground and the seed falling amongst the weeds. The saving word has not gone deep into the souls, and therefore is still subject to the world, either the things of the world choking any growth, or the ground is so shallow that the roots are vulnerable to the trials of life, and so have never matured. One of the great truths of what is called Calvinism is the assured truth. It is the truth of the perseverance of the saints. Come what may, Satan's temptations, the persecutions of the world, the attractions vanity city, will never overcome the true believer. We are safe in the arms of Jesus.

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