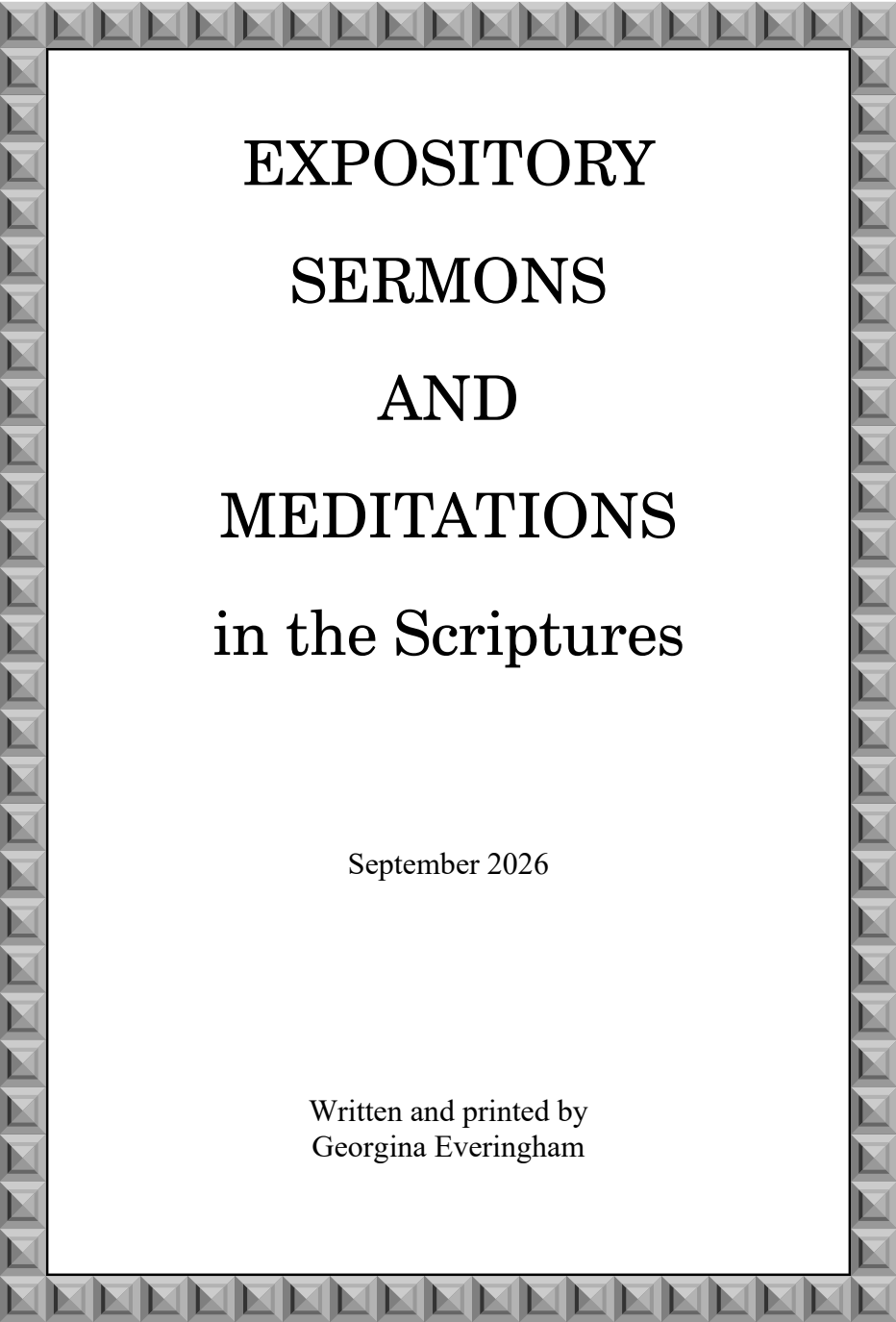




EXPOSITORY SERMONS AND MEDITATIONS in the Scriptures

September 2026

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MEDITATIONS IN 1 & 2 TIMOTHY

September 2026

MEDITATIONS on the 1st Letter to TIMOTHY

1 Timothy 6: 15-16

For Sunday, 6th September 2026

IN verse 13 Paul charged Timothy to keep the command he gives him in verse 12. To encourage him and urge him to live always in the sight of God, in order to please him and serve him faithfully, Paul gives Timothy a reminder of God's deep love revealed in giving his well beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to give his life a ransom for our sins. We considered this great encouragement to live always to please God and revere God and to keep the command of verse 12 in the previous meditation on verses 13 and 14. Not being satisfied with this motive to live in the sight of God always, now in these two verses before us, to enlarge on the greatness and glory of God, as God has made himself known in the Bible, he speaks of the utter glory and majesty of God as the holy potentate over all things in heaven and earth.

It is a sad flaw in most of us believing people that our appreciation of the glory and majesty of God is so poor that we do not truly know what it means to live in the sight of God. To help us understand more of the true nature of God, as he has revealed himself, and is possible for us to achieve, Paul expands our vision of God in verses 15 and 16. Let us now seek the enlightenment of

the Holy Spirit to appreciate more deeply the glory and wonder of God who is over all in our meditation on this revelation Paul now give us.

Paul begins in verse 15 with the words 'which God will bring about in his own time', Paul is referring to the return of Christ at the end of time to judge the living and the dead. The revelation in this statement is in the truth revealed in these words, that God alone determines this event. It is not known even by Jesus Christ. God alone holds all time and the universe in his omnipotent and majestic hands, and controls all things. He is the creator, sustainer, and ruler over all things in heaven and earth, and all history is known and determined by him. Paul goes on to enlarge on the true nature and person of God.

This revelation begins with 'God, the blessed and only ruler'. What an amazing truth and fact. God is over all. He is sovereign over all the affairs of men. Nothing occurs in time which is not under the control of God. Nothing occurs by chance. All the imaginations of man in his wisdom fall short of the truth. He knows all things from the beginning, and all history is an ever present reality to God. God created time in his creation of all things, and exists in an eternal present outside of time which was part of his creation. All the powers in the heavenlies and in earth are under his power and authority. All excellence and glory is in him, and he is the source of it all.

Paul enlarges on this truth in the next words as he speaks of God as 'the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords' which expressed the fact that there is no higher authority or power that his above him, or over him, or ever can be.

The next words of Paul are 'who alone is immortal'. God is above and over time. He has always existed, and he is

ever living, outside of time, in an everlasting eternity. All creation had a beginning, and will have an end. The lives of all humanity are in the hands of God completely. He gave us life, and he is in total control of our future for good or ill. God is the ever living God, with no beginning or end.

Paul goes on with these words 'and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see'. These words express a definitive statement concerning God who is over all, and the source of all reality. How is it possible to expand the meaning of this revelation which God has given of himself through the apostle Paul. Because this is so the Bible gives certain examples and statements in history which must help us to appreciate a small amount of the reality which is God.

We have such in the history of Moses and the people of Israel. This commences in Exodus 19. After three months journeying, Israel camped in the desert of Sinai around the mount. Then God came to Moses hidden in dense cloud to speak to Moses (v.19). The people were told they must not pass limits made clear by God. God showed his majestic power by thunder and lightening over the mountain (v16). This holy majesty of God continues as God tells Moses how his people should worship him. Then came the idolatry of the golden calf, where Moses prayed for the people that God should not destroy them. Then follows Genesis chapter 33: 12-23 where Moses asks to see God's glory and God said he would pass by Moses, who was to hide in cleft of rock while the presence passed by. Verse 20 is where God tells Moses that no one can see him and live, so Moses only saw the back of God as he passed. Then in John 14 when Philip in verse 8 asked to see the Father, Jesus replied 'he that has seen

me has seen to Father'. We see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. God is only seen in his glory in the person of Jesus Christ. 'To him be honour and might forever.

MEDITATIONS on the 1st Letter to TIMOTHY

1 Timothy 6: 17-19

For Sunday, 13th September 2026

Paul, having commanded Timothy to instruct God's people how to live truly in the sight of God, now in these next verses gives Timothy instruction concerning how believers should live in the sight of God in this earthly life. Although the emphasis is on the believing rich, the teaching is also very relevant for all believers as we seek to live for God, and in the sight of God, during our life here on earth.

What Paul is instructing Timothy here is the teaching of Jesus in Matthew 16: 19-24, Where Jesus teaches us to lay up treasure in heaven and not on earth; and speaks of the love of riches as the root of all evil. Riches is the tool in the hands of Satan to encourage people to seek heaven on earth which through Adam's sin is Satan's throne. Satan's goal is to make this world so delightful that he keeps humanity in his power to bring them to hell with him. The things of this world are temporal, but the things of God are eternal.

In verse 17 Paul commands Timothy concerning the rich and also all who seek earthly wealth. Paul does not condemn riches as such, but warns against the corruption that results from riches as Satan excites our

sinful nature. What is this corruption? Riches breed pride and arrogance. It breeds self-importance, and the idea that riches make a person above others. Further riches cause those who possess it to see heaven on earth and to live for this world, to the ruin of their souls. To place hope in riches is folly because, as Jesus taught, moth and rust destroys. Everything in this world is passing and has an end. Paul speaks of the uncertainty of anything concerning this life. Instead Paul tells Timothy to point people to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.

God alone provides all the necessities for this life for every believer. He may grant us wealth, or he may grant us only the necessities of life. He knows what is best for each one, and what is conducive for our eternal happiness and welfare. If God grants us just the necessities of life, we are blessed, because it causes us to more fully to put our trust in the Lord, and to seek heavenly things. The rich live in great dangers leading them to trust in the flesh and earthly things.

Paul goes on in the next verse to teach Timothy how to instruct those who have much of this world's good. He tells them to be good, and he enlarges on this goodness by saying that they must be rich in good deeds, which he describes as using their wealth for the good and blessing of others, and be willing to share with others the wealth they are granted, and not to live only for their own enjoyment. Paul, in his teaching concerning the fellowship meal which was part of the early churches practice leading into the celebration of the Lord's Supper, criticised the rich who fed themselves and disregard those who had nothing. Paul tells Timothy in this verse

that riches must be used for good; in generosity and in willingness to share.

Lastly in verse 19, Paul gives Timothy teaching to move him to be diligent in his teaching to the rich. His words are 'In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of life that is truly life'. In this teaching Paul echos the teaching of Jesus in the sermon on the mount, where Jesus teaches (Matthew 19ff) 'Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroys, and where thieves break through and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and thieves do not break through and steal.'

Jesus adds the profound words 'For where your treasure is, there your heart will be their also.' This life, which seems never ending when we are young, compared with eternity is desperately short compared. How foolish and tragic it is to live only for this life and for self.

The bottom line is who is our master in this life. Jesus so powerfully leads us to consider this in the words of Matthew 6: 24 where he teaches 'No-one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon' (money). That is we must all decide whether we will live for this world, which in truth is to live for self and Satan, or live for God and for heavenly things.

Paul speaks in these verses 'concerning the coming age'. He speaks of laying up treasure for the coming age. This the emphasis we need to have before us in our living. Living for life beyond this life, and facing the fact that this

life is no forever, surely is the secret of Christian living. In the coming age, we who have been granted to see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, need to keep this glory before us as our goal, and live for the glory in the presence of our Lord. So we will lay up treasure in heaven and not on earth.

MEDITATIONS on the 1st Letter to TIMOTHY

1 Timothy 6: 20-21

For Sunday, 20th September 2026

IN the time of Timothy, believers did not have the written New Testament as we do. The truth of the Gospel came in the preaching and teaching of the Apostles. Timothy had been taught by Paul, so when Paul urges Timothy to guard what had been entrusted to him, he is speaking of the this body of truth and teaching which Paul had taught him.

As a minister of Christ and the Gospel Timothy had been entrusted with this body of truth to care for it. Caring for this body of truth meant that Paul was urging Timothy to so meditate on it so it would be accurately remembered by him, and truly understood by him according to the meaning Paul had explained to him. Timothy had been given this body of truth as a trust, not only to preserve it, but also to faithfully declare it to the people he had been entrusted to care for.

This trust given to Timothy is the same trust that is given to all true ministers of Christ. We are called to a ministry to preach the truth of the New Testament and the whole Bible, as the infallible and saving truth of God. Any

deviation from the plain meaning of the text will be reneging from the trust which we are called to keep. We have this body of truth in the New Testament, but also in the Old Testament, and we are faithful to this trust as long as we remain faithful to the whole Bible as the inspired infallible word of God.

This trust was an urgent one because even at this earliest time of the church of Christ, because of the work of Satan deceiving members in the visible church at that time, corruption of this body of truth was happening. So at the close of his first letter to Timothy, where he had set forth the substance of this truth, Paul commands Timothy to guard this truth that had been entrusted to him. In the same way we who are called to preach, are exhorted in the same way to guard the truth of the whole of God's word. So all believers are exhorted to stand firm on the truth which has saved our souls.

How are we to do this? Paul explains in the following words 'Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge, which some have professed and in so doing have wandered from the faith'. How relevant these words are for us today. Let us face these words of Paul honestly, with prayer that we may live by them.

What do we understand by the expression 'godless chatter'. Godless chatter can only mean any discussion and proclamation which opposes the plain truth taught in the whole Bible. If we discuss together difficulties we find we have as we read the Bible, with an honest desire to understand and receive the truth, then this is not godless chatter. However if we discuss and converse with others or in writing or preaching where, in any way, we turn

from the plain meaning of the Scriptures, this is godless chatter. Wherever there is any departure from the word of God revealed in the Bible, this is turning away from God's revealed word, it is turning away from God in rebellion and it is therefore godless - turning away from God.

Paul makes this more clear in the words 'and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge'. Challenging the truth of God in the Bible is claimed to be knowledge which by human reason and the findings of science and also what from which our sinful nature revolts, is raised up to challenge the word of God. Paul calls this false knowledge. It is claimed to be true knowledge, but in fact it is not.

Such opposing ideas appeal to the worldly mind, and is attractive to the mind which is in rebellion to God. This is to be expected in the world at large which is under the dominion of Satan, but Paul is speaking of such profession which has crept into the church and caused a wandering from the faith. Wandering from the faith means wandering from salvation and the favour of God, and therefore is the work of Satan, and damaging souls. It is bringing error into the church which at the heart is bringing Satan's rebellion into the church. When we read the letters to the churches in Revelation chapters 2 and 3 we are able to appreciate its harm and its danger from the judgement of God.

There is no doubt that such godless chatter and false knowledge has infected the visible church over the last century and a half, so it can be fair to say that more than 75% of the visible church is infected by it in the present, showing how desperate is the situation now, and how

imported this charge given by Paul to Timothy is for us today, who seek to take to heart Paul's charge to Timothy in ministry today. But let us take heart. We may feel alone and impotent, and the situation beyond our ability. But God has always had his remnant, and as God reminded Elijah of this in his despondency, he reminds us also. God is on the throne and God will remember his own. Grace be with us.

MEDITATIONS on the 2nd Letter to TIMOTHY

2 Timothy 1: 1-2

For Sunday, 27th September 2026

Paul begins his letters with a greeting which it is good not to pass over without meditation. Paul's greetings contain three parts. In the first place he gives his designation and authority. Then comes his address to whom he is writing. Lastly, he pronounces a blessing. Let us give our attention to these three parts as we commence this second letter of Paul to Timothy.

a) Paul's designation and authority.

1. Paul introduces himself as an Apostle of Jesus Christ. With all the Apostles, this is Paul's unique authority to declare the inspired and infallible word of God. Because of this God was giving his saving and sanctifying truth through Paul. Jesus spoke specially to all the apostles in John 14 to 17, though all the teaching of Jesus in the Gospels and living of Jesus is part of the truth. In these chapters of John Jesus made clear that there was more truth, which the Apostles were not ready then to receive while he was alive, which the Holy Spirit would make

known to them, after his resurrection and ascension. Then, by the operation of the Holy Spirit the Apostles would be enabled to understand all the inspired truth hidden in the Gospel, and in the Old Testament, and so their writings which we have in the New Testament, would be God's inspired truth for the nourishment and building up of his church, and the foundation on which the church stands, and the word of life to all believers.

2. In view of this Paul was indicating that the letters he wrote and the teaching he gave to Timothy, had divine authority to be believed, received and obeyed. Timothy was exhorted guard this truth (v14), and proclaim it, and it comes to us, and the true church today, with the same authority and purpose.

3. This authority was divinely granted to the 11 apostles, and to Paul, who was given to replace Judas, as one born out of due time. This authority was unique to the Apostles, and was given to provide the completion of the canon of Scripture, as the word of God for all time. This proves that the church of Rome's claim to still have the authority to provide divine truth, through the Popes and their teaching, to be the deception of the devil. The words that close the Bible in Revelation 22: 18-19 makes this abundantly clear.

4. So Paul tells us in verse 1 that his teaching was according to the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus. This inspired and infallible word given through Paul and all the Apostles contains the promise of life. This is the eternal life, and salvation from death and hell, which Christ came, at such great cost, to provide, that whosoever believes on him will not perish but have eternal life. So any departure from the pureness of this word of truth

given by Paul, is wandering from the faith which alone saves the soul. Preaching and teaching that departs in any way from this given and inspired word of God endangers souls, places them under the wages of sin which is death.

b) Paul writes to Timothy.

Particularly to Timothy, although as inspired Scripture it contains the authoritative word of God to his church and to all believers.

Paul speaks of Timothy as 'my dear son'. This reveals Paul's particular love for Timothy, but Timothy was not a natural son of Paul, but a spiritual son. We read in verse 6 that Paul had set aside Timothy for the ministry of Christ and the Gospel, by the laying on of his hands, and this implies he had spiritually nurtured Timothy for his work for God, and was concerned to make him strong for this ministry in teaching him and praying for him, which is evident in the two letters he wrote to make Timothy able to be a faithful minister of Christ.

c) Paul's blessing pronounced.

This blessing is similar to the blessing he pronounces in all his letters, but in this case is specially given to Timothy as the recipient of his letter. The blessing comes from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord, as the provider of these saving and sanctifying blessings.

The blessing is threefold. Grace, mercy and peace. In the case of Timothy grace is bestowed so that his ministry might be nurtured and kept in the message of saving grace in Christ. Mercy is so that Timothy, a sinner saved by grace, might know God's mercy always flowing in the

constant falling short of the perfection of God in his private life and in his public ministry. The saved are debtors to mercy alone always and constantly. Peace is the blessing of salvation whereby we live in the peace of God, peace as we face the future, and peace of conscience in the face of Satan's continuous assaulting us with our fallings and failings. Our salvation, and Timothy's, is based on the wonder of salvation, where being justified by faith we have peace with God.

GOD'S WORD FROM HOSEA

Number 35

JUDGEMENT OF GOD

"They will not remain in the Lord's land; Ephraim will return to Egypt and eat unclean food in Assyria. They will not pour out wine offerings to the Lord, nor will their sacrifices please him. Such sacrifices will be to them like the bread of mourners; all that eat of them will be unclean. This food will be for themselves; it will not come into the temple of the Lord."

Hosea 9: 3-4

THESE two verses declare the reality of the judgement of God. This declaration was because of the sinfulness of Israel in the time of Hosea, which amounted to Israel being unfaithful to God. This judgement was prophetic. It warned Israel in the time of Hosea what would be the result of their unfaithfulness to God if they did not repent and return to faithfulness to God. This reveals the grace of God, that is his merciful love toward Israel. These words of Hosea, which God gave him to speak to Israel, was a warning of God's reaction to

their evil living, and so giving them time to repent so that this action of God in judgement could be prevented.

This prophecy was fulfilled in the reign of Hoshea, who was the last king of Israel, the ten northern tribes of the northern kingdom. We have an account of this fulfillment in 2 Kings chapter 17. If we turn to this chapter we are able to read how accurate this prophecy of Hosea was. In this chapter we are told that Israel, in revolting against the tribute they were having to pay to Assyria, turned for help to Egypt and at the same time ceased to pay tribute to Assyria. The result was that the king of Assyria besieged Samaria for three years, after which Samaria fell to the power of Assyria, and the Israelite's were carried off into captivity in Assyria, and from that time these ten tribes of Israel ceased to exist. In this way the prophecy of Hosea is seen to be true in its fulfillment.

No doubt the people of Israel, represented by the majority, reacted to Hosea's words with unbelief and skepticism just as the visible church does to the word of God today, but to their eternal loss they experienced the truth of Hosea's words. The Scripture warns of the fateful eternal judgement of God on all who denigrate the truth of God's word, the Bible, which warns of the certainty of this awful fact. Instead the teaching in the visible speaks of the universal love of God, where we are told that God would never act in what they call such an unloving way. The testimony of God in the Bible speaks of the reality of God's judgement on all that fall short of his holiness, and how in incredible love God gave himself, in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, to suffer this judgement in our place, so that all who believe on Jesus as their sin-bearer and Saviour, shall be saved and receive eternal life.

The accuracy and correctness of this prophecy in these two verse by Hosea.

With this introduction to these two verses before us, we now need to look at these verses in order to see and appreciate the correctness and accuracy of this prophecy of the future judgement of Israel. It is easy for the visible church, and Israel in the time of Hosea, to ignore such a warning when things at the time seem to be going on as they always have, specially as the worldly and sinful life being lived is so appealing.

Hosea is inspired first to declare how and in what way Israel would be affected, when this judgement is executed. The words in Hosea are 'They will not remain in the Lord's land'. These words of prophecy are both startling and direct. God tells Israel the end result of his judgement when it is executed. The expression in the words is interesting. Israel is reminded that the land they had dwelt in so long was the Lord's land. This is because it is the land God promised to the whole tribes of Israel when he brought them out of slavery in Egypt, and that God gave it to the whole of Israel in the time of Joshua. This statement declares that this land was given to Israel according God's promise, and would have not be theirs if God had not given it to Israel. This first sentence of verse three of this ninth chapter of Hosea was telling Israel that by God's power they were given the promised land, and equally by God's almighty power it would be taken from them.

The next phrase begins to tell the details concerning this mighty act of God. The phrase is 'Ephraim will return to Egypt'. Such an action in Israel would have been regarded as impossible - how could Israel ever again return to the land of slavery. The facts told in 2 Kings 17 tell the truth that Israel returned to Egypt to obtain their support against Assyria. What Hosea prophesied, though so unthinkable, actually happened. Israel hoped for the help of their great enemy to help them against the enemy Assyria. Israel had forgotten that it was God who gave them Palestine, and had become so sinful and

faithless that they did not turn to God as the only certain power that could help them.

The next phrase reads 'and eat unclean food in Assyria'. What is this extraordinary saying actually mean? The least thought should make this plain. Unclean food is speaking of the death of Israel's spiritual life in captivity. This food is referring to the fact that part of the sacrifice offered on the altar for the atonement for sin was given to the priest as their food. In Assyria there would be no ability for Israel to offer right and pure sacrifices to God for the atonement of sin, and so the spiritual worship of God would be corrupted, and become impossible, so even if Israel in exile tried to worship God as directed in the time of Moses, their efforts would not be acceptable to God.

The next two phrases take this deprivation of worship to gain acceptance from God and his blessing in more detail. The phrases are as follows 'They will not pour out wine offerings to the Lord nor will their sacrifices please him'. These speak of two terrible results of their exile in Assyria. Firstly, they would not be able to worship God as their religion told them to do, which would be because the Assyrians would hinder them. Secondly, because Israel had so far departed from the Lord in their sinful living, which no doubt continued in exile, when they tried to worship God according to the law of Moses, their sacrifices would not be pleasing to God, and so blessing sought by the sacrifices would be withheld by God.

Then the next two phrases expands on this disastrous judgement of God. Again this speak of two disasters. Firstly, the sacrifice would be like the bread of mourners, and secondly, that the food if eaten would be unclean, and totally useless to please God, but rather bring God's displeasure upon them. The words of the prophecy are 'Such sacrifices will be to

them like the bread of mourners; all that eat them will be unclean.

Sacrifices under the law of Moses were performed to gain forgiveness of sin and impurity. An innocent animal, symbolized by being without any physical blemish, was then killed and burnt as an offering to God, and in this way the death of the animal took the punishment for sin in the place of the offerer, so Israel, by this means, sin could be justly forgiven by God. This was a stop-gap which symbolized Christ, as the lamb of God, bearing the punishment for sin on behalf a repentant sinner who put their trust in him.

The last two phrases which are 'This food will be for themselves; it will not come into the temple of the Lord'. Israel was being told that in exile all their worship would be flawed and unacceptable to God. The only good in it would be that their bodies were fed, but God would not sanction any of it brought into his presence. God's blessing would not be granted.

What truths concerning the judgement of God is made clear and confirmed by this prophecy?

A. In the first place it shows that words spoken by God are true and will be realized.

The judgement of God is repellent to large numbers of people in the visible church today. They are unable to conceive God casting sinners and unbelievers into the eternity of suffering in hell. Because of this, the conviction of many earnest church people think of many ways to get over the plain words of Scripture which affirm this fact of the eternal judgement. This thinking in the end is a rejection of such teaching given by the inspiration of God, as the thinking of men and not the truth of God. In this way belief in the Bible as the infallible truth of God, and God revealing his truth, is overwhelmed by human reason,

and in this way the Bible's integrity and authority is reduced to human judgement, where human reason is exalted over the wisdom and truth of God.

Here in this prophecy of Hosea we find the word of God and its truth proved to be true. Hosea made his prophecy, under the inspiration of God, years before it was proved to be true later in the history of Samaria. Later history proves the words of Hosea here to be absolutely true.

No doubt many prophets in the time of Hosea challenged Hosea's words, in the same way as members and theologians in the visible church challenge the Bible teaching as unbelievable and not true today. This is seen concerning the fact of the final judgement of unbelieving sinners at Christ's return to judge the living and the dead. They cast doubts on such testimony of Scripture, or give interpretation of such passages of Scripture which denies the obvious meaning of the words written in the Bible.

Hosea's words to Israel in these first four verses of Hosea chapter 9 have been proved by history to be absolutely true, much to the loss and punishment of Israel, that is the ten separated tribes of Israel, which broke away from Judah and Benjamin in the reign of Rehoboam, the son of Solomon. The prophesied judgement fell as foretold, and the total loss of the ten tribes followed.

History here in the Old Testament is seen and proved to be true, and testifies to the horror and total loss which followed. The Bible teaches so clearly the eternal judgement of God on those who reject the love of God in Christ and his sin-bearing. Those who reject this prophecy made so clear in the whole Bible, will find to their everlasting loss and horror that God's word is true, when it will be too late for all eternity.

B. History is in God's control.

It follows from the fulfillment of Hosea's prophecy in the history of Israel, that history is under the control and authority of God.

When we reduce the character and power of God to human power and thinking, then such control over history is thought to be unimaginable. The fact is that the revelation which God has given of himself in the Bible is so incredible and incomprehensible to fallen human understanding and thinking that this is not surprising.

The Bible commences with the words 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth'. Human wisdom, filled with the theory of evolution etc., passes over this first verse of Genesis in a dismissive way. But what is God revealing? He is revealing his eternal existence. He is revealing his grand omnipotence. He is revealing his omniscience. He reveals that he lives eternally outside of time in an eternal present. He reveals that by his power and wisdom he brought the world and universe we know into existence, and he is in control of all he created and brought into being. It tells us that time as we know it, which governs our whole existence, is part of his creation. From this we are able to deduce that all history was and is known by God, and brought into being by God, and that God knows, and has ordained all history from the beginning to the end.

This is beyond our minds to conceive or compute. It makes our minds spin without any solution or understanding. We are God's creation and are subject completely to him. It tells us that God created all things, he sustains all things, and he rules with total sovereignty, over all he created. History is known by God, all the time, from beginning to end.

C. Hosea's prophecy reveals the Grace of God.

Grace is God's incredible undeserved favour to undeserving and sinful human beings. There is no doubt, as we view the history of Israel, that God's reaction to Israel's despising his love, and turning away in disobedience to God who had blessed them and given them so much, it would be expected that God's patience with Israel would have run out long before this time of Hosea. If we were treated like Israel treated God's love, we would feel justified in finding our patience and love exhausted, and we would turn against such ingratitude.

What do we have revealed here in this prophecy of Hosea. Hosea was not sent simply to tell Israel that God had finished with them forever. Instead we hear God warning Israel of the consequences of their unfaithfulness years in advance of any final punishment, and so giving them time to consider their behaviour, and giving them time to repent and turn back to God.

We see from the history told in the book of Jonah, that if such warning is heeded and genuine repentance is expressed, that God withholds his punishment, and forgives and blesses. There is no doubt that if God's warning through Hosea had been heeded by Israel, this promised judgement would have been withdrawn. People who cry out in horror at the action of God in judgement, and eternal punishment, never seem to take note of the incredible grace of God in his patience, and his warnings. Nor do they believe the incredible grace of God in giving his Son as the propitiation for our sins. They speak of love, but their idea of God's loving falls short massively from the reality of his love revealed in the Bible.

D. Hosea's prophecy shows the reality of God's final judgement on sinners when they reject his wondrous forgiving love and grace.

There is no doubt that God's word through Hosea was true, and God's revelation of his judgement if Israel did not heed his word and repent, was exactly true, and carried out eventually when Israel refused to believe God's gracious warning.

In like manner the teaching of the whole Bible, and specially in the teaching of Jesus, is true. This word of God is dreadfully and completely declared in Matthew 25: 46 – 'Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life'. The word in the Greek in both clauses is exactly the same. If the gift and promise of eternal life for all who believe the Gospel that Christ Jesus came to bear the just punishment we deserve on the cross, is true eternally; then the word of God concerning the eternal punishment of all who reject Christ as their sin-bearer and Saviour, is also absolutely true eternally.

God's word bids you come, and repent, and be saved. It is a call of love, mercy and grace – Jesus cries come and be saved.

SEPTEMBER 2026

GOD'S MESSAGE IN 2 PETER

Expository Sermons in the 2nd Epistle of Peter

BE ON YOUR GUARD

"Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory now and for ever. Amen."

2 Peter 3: 17-18

APPPLICATION is most important in any and every declaration of the truth – that is the wisdom – of God.

In the previous verses Peter has boldly and forcefully expressed the wonderful truth that God has given us, in his divine wisdom, to Peter and Paul, and indeed every writer in the Bible. This truth and wisdom concerns the most important doctrine of how a person can know and be given the gift of eternal life, so that a person can face death unafraid and with assurance and confidence. In this third chapter he has gone further by calling us to look forward to the return of our Lord Jesus Christ, when final redemption and eternal life will be brought into everlasting being, and where this world, and Satan, and so much evil and misery, will be ever gone, and a new creation will be brought about and into being by God.

Peter has warned us that there is a constant work of Satan to deny this truth and wisdom of God, and deprive human beings of this blessing of eternal life.

In these last two verses of his second letter he ends his epistle with this urgent application of all the truth of God he has been inspired to write. He speaks to us with the urgency deep in his heart, to be on our guard so that we may not be led astray and be destroyed eternally by unbelief. How important it is that we should heed this warning. The forces of the world, under Satan's vicious working, is ever bombarding the people of faith, to undermine our faith and keep us in everlasting destruction.

There is a wondrous love exhibited in the warning to be on our guard. Peter begins his exhortation with a word of endearment and friendship. He addresses the saints with the words 'Dear friends'. The apostles never set themselves above other believers. The church of true believers expresses a family of God. In this way we can

see how the saints in the early church found themselves so ready to embrace the teaching which was given here by Peter, even if it came in a form of a rebuke. Here, however, Peter's exhortation came with such love and deep concern for the eternal security and blessing of the believers, the true church, to whom he wrote.

Peter goes on in the best way to attract the believers to whom he wrote to receive his teaching and exhortation. He assumes that they have understood and received the doctrine of redeeming love. His words are 'since you already know this'. In such an address he expresses his confidence that the believers were not only true believers, but also that their lives were on a sure foundation.

How important it is that church people are built on the strong foundation of the apostles and prophets. It is also stressed, in these words of the apostle, how important it is that good and faithful teaching is being provided by ministers, and this true doctrine is repeated, so understanding of it is firm, and remembrance of it is constant.

Christians need to be constantly reminded to ensure their lives are firmly fixed on the doctrines of Christ's saving work. Those who have little knowledge of the whole counsel of God are more easily led astray by ignorant and unstable people who are called by Peter here as lawless men. Lawless men are those who reject the word of God in some way, and therefore are disobedient of God. Unstable ministers are those who have embraced errors which Satan has introduced into the church, and so embraced them that they become puffed up with pride in their errors, and express them

with such confidence that those to whom they minister are led astray to the everlasting damage of their souls.

Peter speaks of lawless men who seek to promote error in order to seduce believers from their secure position.

These men who promote error are called lawless by Peter. We may well be surprised by such a designation. Such men are usually good citizens, upright in their living. They will be received in society and within the church as learned teachers. They will claim to be doing the work of God, and have much assurance that their way of life and their teaching is sound and acceptable. They are able to argue that their teaching is right, and a true understanding of the Bible. When questioned concerning the truth of their claim to be teaching the truth of God, and not being unfaithful to the Bible message, they will be able to argue strongly that they have the right teaching, and be able to make someone feel ridiculed for standing firm on the plain meaning of the Bible text. They will argue that they have progressed in their thinking beyond the limited understanding of the apostles and the Bible writers. They will look down in a superior way on those faithful to the word of God, and declare the progress of knowledge in science and reason in modern times has progressed enormously from what they consider as the primitive understanding of the church in New Testament times.

In spite of all these claims the apostle Peter describes them as lawless. How can this be? The truth is that in spite of their claim to have superior knowledge and understanding, they are lawless because they are disobedient to God.

The Scriptures declare, as Peter does and all the apostles, that God has given in the Bible, his truth, his wisdom. As we have already heard from Peter, this truth and wisdom of God is incomprehensible to all apart from those who are born again of the Spirit of God. Paul expresses in 1 Corinthians that the world with its wisdom does not know God. How can a dead person know anything about the kingdom of God and the truth of God. Paul makes this plain in the opening of chapter two of his letter to the Ephesians. He speaks of all human beings being born into this world in spiritual death in trespasses and sins, so as Peter has made clear already in this second letter, there is nothing in natural man, however clever they are, that can come to God's revealed word in the Bible, and understand or know the spiritual truth from God that God has provided in the Bible.

God is the author of the Bible. The Bible is the truth and wisdom of God. To disagree with any part of the word of God is tantamount to declaring that men are more intelligent and above God and their opinions and teaching is greater than God's.

Such is the pride of this human lawlessness that such truth about the Bible is proudly rejected by human wisdom. This attitude is to be expected because from the moment Adam and Eve decided to believe and obey Satan, the whole of natural humanity has been under the dominion of Satan. Satan is able, with his hate of God, to so occupy that wisdom of fallen humanity, that he causes men to believe that they know better than God, and to cast out or reject or diminish much of the Bible, and claim it is foolish and proved wrong by superior natural reason, and modern discovery.

By his subtlety, Satan has been able to introduce error into the visible church, and cause his subtlety to be embraced. Such has been the success of Satan that error seems to have dominated the visible church in modern times to the destruction of belief, and cause the secure position true believers have in Christ to be taken away.

How we who hold fast the truth of God's word need to be on our guard so that we may not be carried away by error and lose our faith. Peter's warning to be on our guard is desperately important so that all believers, but specially ministers, may not become afraid of teaching the whole counsel of God, through the fear of human opinion.

In verse 18 Peter speaks of the true way forward for all the faithful. He tells us to grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. So let us ask ourselves what it means to grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Growth in grace comes as we hold fast to the faith given us by the Holy Spirit concerning the truths of saving grace. When we believed first by the grace of God and the work of the Holy Spirit, we were give the light of Christ to see our sin and how far short we have fallen from the holiness of God. Newton in his well known hymn 'Amazing grace', and in the second verse, expresses the truth of God's grace. He says 'twas grace that taught my heart to fear'. This expresses the first work of grace which God work in our soul. We see how greatly we have offended God, and we are brought low in repentance and to fear God and the awful judgement of God our sins deserve.

Newton in the second line of this second verse goes on to say 'it was grace my fears relieved'. Grace, God's

unmerited favour, gave us an interest in the Saviour's death. Grace showed us how in great love God gave his only begotten Son to perish for our sins in our place, and satisfy the whole holy law of God, in precept and penalty, so that all who come empty handed, and in faith throw ourself on Jesus Christ as our sin-bearer and Saviour, receive eternal life.

Peter exhorts us to grow in this wondrous grace of God. We grow as we grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour. Growth is achieved as we abide in Christ, growing in the knowledge of his wondrous work of saving us, in obedience to the Father.

This is achieved by faith in the wisdom and truth of God, by believing wholeheartedly in the whole teaching of the Bible, and by the Spirit, like Mary, sit at the feet of Jesus and fill our mind and heart with all the truth of his saving work, so that our love for him grows as we more and more dwell in his presence and increase in the fulness of God's saving work in Christ. This is achieved by using all the means of grace and filling our mind and understanding with the whole counsel of God provided for us in the Bible. Satan will use all his wiles to dampened our ardour for Christ by filling our minds with the pleasures and necessities of life.

As we dwell in the presence of Christ in this way, and behold his glory and the glory of God in grace toward us, we will more and more join with Peter in his closing words 'To him be glory both now and for ever! Amen.

SEPTEMBER 2026