

## 2 Peter 2:1b

Chapter 2 is a continuation from the idea that Peter labored at the end of Chapter 1. He made it clear that the Old Testament prophets were carried along by the Holy Spirit to record the words of God. The prophetic word of the Old Testament was made more sure by the incarnation of Christ as Peter was an eyewitness. The same is true to the New Testament authors as they too were carried along by the Holy Spirit to record the God breathed (theopneustos) words. The origin of Scripture is God (not man), but God used men as instruments that He carried along by the Holy Spirit. Peter drives home the point that God was the origin of the words spoken by the true prophets of God in the Old Testament as compared to the false prophets whose words come from their own fallen heart and not from God. The whole matter comes down to the source and the origin of the words: God or man?

Christians and the Church face many battles outside the walls of the church. However, there is a difference about fighting outside the walls of the church as compared to fighting a battle within the walls of the church as is the case with false prophets, teachers, and heretics. These people are within the church and claim to be a Christian. They look and sound like they know the Bible and often are great orators and possess leadership qualities.

- Visible versus Invisible church
- Wise and foolish virgins (Matthew 25)
- If they go out from us, they were never with us (1 John 2: 15-19)

### **False teachers arose among the people**

This is speaking of the Old Testament and is referring to Israel. There were false prophets among the true believers in Israel.

### **There will also be false teachers among you**

Peter addresses his first epistle to the Diaspora. Throughout Old Testament scripture, this term was used to describe Jews who were scattered into other lands including in exile. In Acts 2 at Pentecost, Luke lists multiple places from which Jewish men had come from not only to gather for Pentecost, but also came from to live in Jerusalem (Acts 2:5-11). Peter's list of places to whom his recipients were from that are listed in 1 Peter 1:1 is similar to the places where the Jewish men are from in Acts 2:5-11. As the early church began to spread the Gospel of Jesus, they faced significant persecution which scattered them into foreign lands as exiles and sojourners. Traditionally this terminology was used for the Jews, but it is likely that Peter could also have been writing to Gentiles as well who were also part of the church as the message from the Gospel spread to them in their Gentile areas and were converted.

### **False prophets, teachers, apostates, and heretics in the New Testament**

- Acts 20:24-31
- 1 Timothy 4:1-5
- 2 Timothy 3:1-10
- 2 Timothy 4:1-4
- 1 John 4:1-6
- Matthew 7:15-23
- 2 Peter 3:16-18

## Secretly introduce destructive heresies

These false prophets and teachers are clever and sneaky. They will appear to be a normal Christian and follower of Christ. They will sometimes blend in for a while to gain the trust of the people. They will sound like a Christian and will use “Biblical” and religious language. They will not openly parade that they are introducing destructive heresies, but will secretly introduce these heresies slowly, methodically, and cleverly. They are wolves in sheep's clothing, not wolves in their own clothing.

- **Jude 4** For certain people have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand <sup>[a]</sup>marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into indecent behavior and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

**Heresies**- Heresies are doctrines or teachings that change the nature of the faith so fundamentally that it no longer can be trusted to be saving faith. Heresy is a gross and dangerous error, voluntarily held and factiously maintained by some person or persons within the visible church, in opposition to some chief or substantial truth or truths grounded upon and drawn from the holy Scripture by necessary consequence. Heresy is teaching anything in disagreement with the fundamental (essential) doctrines of the Christian faith.

- Heresy is not the same as error. Heresy is the choice to abandon the widely accepted teaching on an essential doctrine as recorded in the Bible and embrace one's own view.
- Heresy is to preach another gospel (**Galatians 1:6-10**)

**The church for millennia has faced attacks from false teachers who have brought destructive heresies into the church. Below is a list of several of the prominent heresies that the true church has faced and stood against with the word of God.**

- **Gnosticism**-This was considered to be the most threatening heresy to the early church in the first three centuries. This was present at the time of Peter's epistles. Gnostics divided the world into physical and spiritual realms and believed that matter is inherently evil and spirit is good. Since they believe matter is evil, they hold to a view that an evil, lesser god was involved in creation. Gnostics believe anything done in the body has no meaning because real life exists in the spirit realm only. The word gnostic comes from the Greek word “gnosis” which means “to know.” The gnostics believed that they had a higher or more enlightened knowledge than others, not from the Bible as the source, but rather from a higher mystical spiritual source. They did not hold the Bible as the source of truth, but rather believed in a mystical higher spiritual realm that only a few were privy to. They considered themselves elite and higher than others due to this special and higher level of spiritual knowledge including higher knowledge than the apostles. Gnosticism teaches that salvation is gained through the acquisition of special divine knowledge and enlightenment which sets a person free from darkness and into salvation. They believed Jesus' body was not real and denied His humanity. They hold to the idea that since the body is bad, Jesus's body only appeared to be real (similar to Docetism) and as a result did not die on the cross or have a bodily resurrection. Some within this view believe that Jesus took on the form of man temporarily (from the time of His baptism to just prior to the resurrection) and is not eternally the God man. This view is still present today and is called by a new name: the new age movement.
- **Sabellianism**- Sabellianism is named for its founder Sabellius and found the height of this heretical teaching in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. This view claims that there is one God, but not three divine persons. This view states that God shifts into modes or manifestations and as result God sometimes is in the mode of the Father, sometimes the Son, and sometimes the Holy Spirit, but cannot be all three at the same time. This is an attack of the triune nature of God and does not go along for the hypostatic union as Jesus could not have had any human nature, since He was a manifestation or mode of God. It is sometimes referred to as modalistic monarchianism. *This is*

still present today in what is currently called modalism and is held by false teachers such as Steven Furtick, Michael Todd, and T.D Jakes.

- **Docetism**- This comes from the Greek word dokeo, which means “to seem.” The heresy was prevalent in the early church and held to the heretical view that Jesus seemed to be a human being but didn’t have a human body and soul. This view was denied by the early church as Christ was truly God and truly man in the hypostatic union. John may have had this in mind when he wrote **1 John 4:1-3**.
- **Adoptionism**- This heretical view held that Jesus was “adopted” by God at the conception of Jesus and this in return gave Jesus divine power. Later views of adoptionism claim that Jesus was adopted by God and received divine power at His baptism.
- **Arianism**- This heresy was named after a 4<sup>th</sup> century priest in Alexandria, Egypt named Arius. This heresy claimed that Jesus was not God but was created by God as the first act of creation from a misrepresentation of Romans 8:29 and Christ being the “firstborn of many brethren”. This view also claimed that Jesus' nature was “anomois” or unlike the Father. This view holds that Jesus is a finite creature with some divine attributes, but He is not eternal or deity in any of His own self or nature. Jesus is less than God, but higher than a human and can still be worshiped. This heresy was met headfirst by the church which led to the council of Nicea in 325 A.D to which the church ruled Arianism heretical and then as a result established the Nicene creed. Many religions such as Mormons and Jehovah’s Witnesses hold to a form of Arianism in regards to their view of Jesus.
- **Montanism**- This is named after a self proclaimed prophet named Montanus who lived in Asia Minor in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. He taught that the Holy Spirit was continuing to work through him and give him new revelation including a revelation that Jesus would soon bring the New Jerusalem to a place in Phrygia. He claimed to have the gift of prophecy and would speak in convulsive and ecstatic utterances which were contrary to truths that had been held by the early church. He stated the Holy Spirit was working through him and speaking through him and his ecstatic utterances. He claimed to be the embodiment of the Spirit of Truth that would be sent by the Father in **John 14:26**. Montanus and his followers claimed his words and revelations and as well as their own were as authoritative as the sacred Scriptures. However, most often their words were unable to be understood as they spoke in ecstatic utterances, tongues, and chaos. They claimed they were spirit filled while “regular Christians” were not since they had revelations and spoke in tongues and utterances and were also baptized with a special baptism.
- **Nestorianism**- This view was named after Nestorius an archbishop of Constantinople in the 5<sup>th</sup> century. This heresy held to the view that was in opposition to the hypostatic union with Christ being truly God and truly man. The Nestorian view believed that Christ existed as two persons, sharing one body. This heresy was the final heresy that led to the church giving a final and definite response to the person of Christ at the council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D.
  - An excerpt from Ligonier: *According to Nestorius, Jesus is the union of two persons—a human person and a divine person. This is not a union of essences but rather a close moral union. In other words, Nestorius believed the union was not such that we could say the humanity of Jesus actually belongs to the Son of God. Instead, it belongs only to the human person. When Christ died, it was not the incarnate Son of God suffering according to His human nature; it was the human person who died. When Christ performed a miracle, it was not the incarnate Son of God acting according to His divine nature to manifest His power; it was the divine Logos acting independently of the human person in Jesus. The errors of Nestorianism become evident when we reflect on the atonement. If Christ is two persons, who died on the cross? It cannot be the infinite divine person of the Son, for He has not assumed a human nature. He possesses only a divine nature, which cannot experience suffering. So, it must have been the human person who suffered and died because the human person in Christ has a human nature, which can experience suffering. But then we have the death only of a finite person, for human persons are finite. And the merit of a finite human sacrifice could hardly be applied to anyone besides the finite person who offers it. Thus, the Westminster Larger Catechism 38 says that Christ had to be God—He had to be a divine person with a human nature so as to give His human suffering sufficient worth to atone for many (Heb. 5:9). Nestorianism gives us an insufficient atonement.*

- **Macedonianism/Pneumotomachian**- This was a 4<sup>th</sup> century heresy that denied the full divinity and personhood of the Holy Spirit. This view held that the Holy Spirit was created by God, thus making the Holy Spirit subordinate and subservient to the Father and Son. This heresy was refuted at the council of Constantinople in 381 A.D. The Nicene creed would also be expanded to defend that the Holy Spirit is God and worthy of worship. Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is the unforgivable sin (**Matthew 12:31**).
- **Pelagianism**- This heresy came from a British monk in the late 4<sup>th</sup> century and the early 5<sup>th</sup> century who denied original sin from Adam and claimed that people were born innocent and good with the ability to choose freely to do good all the time. This is in direct opposition to multiple passages including **Romans 5**. The pelagian heresy held to the view that God created all humans good and that humans are not born with an inclination to sin and are not in slavery to sin by their nature from birth as a result of inherited sin nature from Adam's fall. This view held that we are born with the ability to choose and do good and did not need a supernatural regeneration to choose God, obey God, or do good. Pelagianism's underlying fault is its reliance on human freedom, freewill, and willpower instead of the grace of God to bring about salvation. In saying that we all possess an inherent power to choose holiness for ourselves, Pelagius made the grace of God of no effect and placed all the ability in man rather than the grace and mercy of God. Pelagian and his heresy were refuted and fought by Augustine and condemned at the council of Carthage in 418 A.D, which was the same year Pelagius was excommunicated. This view did not go away and was refuted at other church councils including the council of Ephesus in 431 A.D. Only God is good (**Luke 18:18-19**).

#### **Heresies and destructive doctrines taught today (some are continued from above) (not an exhaustive list)**

- Jesus is not the only way to Heaven
- Jesus is not God
- Jesus was created
- Jesus was not perfect (God broke the law for love-Steven Furtick)
- The Holy Spirit is not God
- Humans are not sinful by nature
- The Bible is not infallible
- Good deeds are what gets one into Heaven
- All people go to Heaven
- Denial of the atonement on the cross
- Denial of the virgin birth
- Denial the resurrection
- Catholicism (denial of justification by grace alone through faith)(worship of saints and Mary, etc)
- Kenosis heresy- Jesus gave up some or all divine attributes and functioned as a man, making Him not fully divine.
- Modalism
- Repentance is not needed, God loves you the way are
- Prosperity gospel(little gods)
- Etc

**Galatians 1:6-10** I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you <sup>[a]</sup>by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; <sup>7</sup> which is *really* not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. <sup>8</sup> But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel <sup>[b]</sup>contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be <sup>[c]</sup>accursed! <sup>9</sup> As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel <sup>[d]</sup>contrary to what you received, he is to be <sup>[e]</sup>accursed!<sup>10</sup> For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.

**Jude 3** Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the <sup>[a]</sup>saints.