



Scotts Hill Baptist Church

GROWING STRONG IN THE TRUTH // • COUNTERFEIT CHRISTIANITY // •
2 PETER 2:1-10A •

MAIN POINT

The lies of false teachers are dangerous and destructive, and we must oppose them by taking a strong stand for spiritual truth.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What does it feel like to be lied to and know that you are being lied to, even as the lie is spoken? What does it feel like to discover that something you believed to be true is actually false?

What are some subtle lies we have believed that impact our daily life?

What are some of the most dangerous lies we might believe about the Christian faith? About our lifestyle choices?

Lies and deceit are prevalent in a fallen world. All of us have either been contributors or victims. Perhaps we have even devoutly believed some things about God or His Word that are simply not true. It's also possible that we have believed some things true about ourselves that are actually false. Second Peter 2 reminds us that false prophets and teachers are always around spreading dangerous lies, and reminds us that we ought to be wary.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 2 PETER 2:1-3.

How would you respond to the statement, “There is no such thing as absolute truth”?

Why do you think false teachers would want the Christians Peter was addressing to deny that there is absolute truth?

According to Peter in verse 3, what was the false teachers’ real motivation for deceiving Christians with false teachings?

Peter warned that false teachers would take advantage of believers out of greed—either a selfish desire for money or for a large company of followers. The Greek term rendered “exploit” means “make gain of; deceive for (their own) advantage.” With deceptive (carefully crafted, false) words, the misleading merchants of error would use believers for their own gain. Awaiting the false teachers, however, was a day of reckoning. The verdict or sentence had been announced long ago in Old Testament references to false prophets.

Why do you think Peter was so motivated to work urgently to help Christians have confidence in the truth of the gospel?

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 2 PETER 2:4-10A.

These verses give three illustrations to prove that God has judged in the past and will judge again in the future. The examples gradually reduce in scale, from the cosmic (angels), through the worldwide (flood), to the local (cities of Sodom and Gomorrah). These illustrations concentrate on the pride and rebellion of the angels, the apathy and disobedience of the people of Noah’s day, and the sheer sensuality of the men of Sodom, precisely the characteristics of these false teachers. They are demonstrative proof that there will be a final judgment.

Why do you think false teachers would spread the lie that there is no final judgment?

How does the truth of God’s judgment help us as believers to stand firm?

What hope is there in this passage for godly men and women?

Consistently, the New Testament views the second coming of Christ as the final test. At that time, the Lord will rescue His true followers, but the ungodly will face judgment, for the Lord knows how to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment. “To hold” (verse 9)

literally means “to keep or to guard.” It suggests that God is in control of judgment and people; He will have the final say. We can be confident in that truth, dismissing the lie that there is no final judgment.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

What are some examples of absolute truth we see in Scripture? How can these truths help us fight the lies? Practically speaking, how can we avoid being taken in by the lies of false teachers?

Where are you most likely to be tempted to blur the lines of a sinful lifestyle or even believe a dangerous lie that redefines sin as something other than sin? How can you respond to that tendency in light of this study?

What does it look like to affirm one another in following Christ with our lives?

PRAYER

Close your time in prayer, thanking God that in His wisdom He gave us the power to fight the lies of false teachers. Thank God for the blood of Christ that saved us and is the only way to fight against the lies of Satan. Pray that your group would be discerning of false voices and lies in their lives.

COMMENTARY

| 2 PETER 2:1-10A.

2:1. Peter pointed out that throughout Israel’s history, false (pseudo) prophets had arisen among the people. He warned that false teachers would arise among believers. These bogus teachers would secretly bring in destructive heresies. The heretical teachers were denying the Master who bought them. They may have denied Jesus’ Deity or His return, or they may have denied Him by their conduct (see 2:2). Evidently, they professed to be believers. The word Master referred to Jesus as their absolute authority or owner. By His death on the cross, He purchased them to serve Him. They belonged to Him and owed Him their allegiance. Their unchristian lifestyles and erroneous teachings, however, gave evidence they denied His lordship over their lives even though they professed to be His

followers. Their practice contradicted their profession. If they persisted in denying Jesus, they would bring swift (or sudden) destruction on themselves. Peter likely had in mind the final judgment, when the false teachers' empty profession, heretical teachings, and impure lifestyles would be revealed as such and judged.

2:2-3. Peter was aware that the false teachers' unrestrained ways would attract many followers. The phrase "unrestrained ways" translates a Greek term that conveys the idea of indecent conduct with no regard for God's judgment, people's opinions, or one's own reputation. It can describe blatant immorality. Such godless, undisciplined behavior would cause unbelievers to blaspheme (discredit) the way of truth. The phrase "the way of truth" referred to sound Christian teaching as opposed to false doctrines. Unbelievers would speak disparagingly or contemptuously of the Christian enterprise because of professing believers' immoral behavior. Peter warned that false teachers would take advantage of believers out of greed—either a selfish desire for money or for a large company of followers. The Greek term rendered "exploit" means "make gain of," "deceive for (their own) advantage." With deceptive (carefully crafted, false) words, the misleading merchants of error would use believers for their own gain. Awaiting the false teachers, however, was a day of reckoning. The verdict or sentence (condemnation) had been announced long ago in Old Testament references to false prophets. The verdict still was operative, and the false teachers' ruin (destruction) awaited them.

2:4-10a. In order to warn his readers and urge them to action, Peter recalled three examples of God's judgment and deliverance: (1) God judged the angels who sinned (cp. Gen 6:1-4). "Tartarus" is a Greek name that means a subterranean place of punishment lower than Hades and reserved for the wicked. (2) God also judged the ancient world at the time of the flood (cp. Gen 7:17-23), but protected Noah and seven others (cp. Gen 7:13-16). (3) He judged the immoral cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (cp. Gen 19:23-29), yet rescued righteous Lot, who was distressed and tormented by the immoral behavior of the ungodly (cp. Gen 19:29). Peter then pointed out to his readers that God was capable of delivering them, the godly, from the destructive false teachings of heretics in their midst. Peter further assured his readers that despite the false teachers' immorality, the unrighteous, especially those who followed the polluting desires of the flesh and despised authority, would not escape God's sovereignty or punishment.