

98-04-05a

Turn with me this morning for our scripture reading to 2 Peter, chapter 2. 2 Peter, chapter 2. The context of our study, Genesis chapter 5, the line of Seth, the descendants of Adam, who are represented to us in that chapter as forming the seed of the woman, the seed of promise. 2 Peter, in this chapter, Peter makes reference to those days as we look forward from chapter 5 to chapter 6, the days between the fall of Adam and the sin of Cain, the proliferation of Cain's descendants, the proliferation of Seth's descendants that we studied last week. In that age, man multiplies on the face of the earth.

We have the record of those lines and the comparison between them. And this is going to develop into something of a crisis that we're going to see this morning at the end of chapter 5 and the beginning of chapter 6 of Genesis. This is something to which Peter refers.

When you look at genealogies, you look at the lines of descent of these two remaining sons of Adam, the large question is, so what? Why is that important to me? Why should I be aware of these two lines and the differences between them? Why does the study of Genesis 5 or Genesis 6 really matter? You get into questions of angels intermarrying with men and the wickedness that causes God to bring about the flood and so forth. We're not in danger of a flood. God has promised that he will never again destroy the earth by a flood.

So while these things may be interesting and we may have some fascinating events and personages, how does that affect me and my thinking and my life today and tomorrow and the next day? Peter addresses that question in really both of his epistles. Here in the second epistle of Peter, these things form a part of his illustration of a principle. We'll read this passage and then we'll briefly review that principle as an introduction to our study this morning in Genesis.

We begin actually in verse 19 of chapter 1 of 2 Peter. It's an unfortunate place to put a chapter break there at 2.1. This section really begins in verse 19 of 2 Peter 1. And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. This is a reference of course to the New Testament revelation, what Paul calls the mystery doctrines, the things that had not been revealed in the Old Testament age.

And yet the prophecies and the teachings of the Old Testament foreshadowed and in many ways are enriched and given their full meaning as we look at them in retrospect from the standpoint of our day, of the New Testament, the church age. So Peter says we have that prophetic word, we have the Old Testament scriptures confirmed. They are fulfilled.

The shadows have yielded to the realities that we can now clearly see. And we do well to

heed these truths like a light that shines in a dark place until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. This is a reference to the indwelling of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Revelation 3.20, Jesus pictures himself standing at the door and knocking. And that of course is addressed to a church. It's not salvation, it isn't an invitation to be saved.

After salvation, through the study of God's word, we have the opportunity to experience the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ and God the Father in our hearts. And we've seen that passage several times over in John chapter 15. And that Peter represents here as the day dawning and the morning star rising in our hearts.

Knowing this first, that no prophecy of scripture is of any private interpretation. This verse has been often misapplied. People say, in fact I just recently had someone comment that we have to be careful to not come up with a unique understanding of scripture that isn't in the mainstream of the church because that's a private interpretation.

Private interpretation is out. It needs to be an interpretation that many people in the church agree with and understand and promote and so forth. If you look at this verse, there is some merit to being cautious about an original interpretation.

You need to have a solid foundation in the scripture. But that's not what this verse is talking about. He says in verse 19 that we need to heed the prophetic word, the word of the scriptures, the word that we have confirmed, the teaching of the Old Testament and the teaching of the New Testament as a means of arriving at the place where we have close communion with God the Son and through Him God the Father, the day star rising in our hearts.

That's heeding the words of scripture. We pay attention to what scripture teaches. Knowing this, that no prophecy of scripture, those prophecies he just referred to in verse 19, these are not of any private derivation, might be a better translation here than interpretation.

What he's saying is the words of scripture weren't invented by the writer. Isaiah didn't just sit down one day and write a fictional novel and then submit it to Israel as the prophetic word of God. The apostles, John and Paul and Peter and James, didn't sit down and concoct their writings, their New Testament epistles, the way that, for example, Joseph Smith did the Book of Mormon.

Now there's a case of a prophecy or something put forth as being the word of God was a privately derived writing. Joseph Smith sat down and glommed together a lot of King James English and tried to pass it off as something he read through the golden glasses on the tables of gold or whatever that mysteriously disappeared and the angel Moron or

Moroni gave to him and took away from him and so forth. That's something that originated with man and not with God.

Peter says the reason that we have confidence in the prophetic word is these things weren't privately derived. These scriptures, the prophecies of scripture, never came by the will of man, he says in verse 21. He's not saying the interpretation doesn't come from the will of man, that you've got to sit there and wait for a divine spark of insight.

He's saying the scriptures themselves are not man-made. They don't originate with man. Human writers weren't intermediary.

That's what he refers to here. Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. So we treat the words of scripture as coming directly from God through the agency of the writer.

And this verse 20, knowing that no prophecy of scripture is of any private interpretation, don't let anyone come to you and say, well, you shouldn't be listening to any understandings that are out of the mainstream because that's a private interpretation. Completely misunderstands the verse. Peter's talking about the origin of the scriptures themselves, the prophetic revelations in the Old and New Testament come as men wrote them under the influence, under the moving ministry of God the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 2, verse 1. But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you. Now the idea here when it says false teachers among you is that these are people in the church. They're not unbelievers with evil intent who have sneaked in trying to subvert the church.

These are believers, in many cases well-intentioned, well-meaning yet ignorant people who teach falsehood. They are among you, within you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies. Now it says secretly.

If you come into a church and begin to teach a heresy, it's not a secret, is it? How can you secretly teach? Teaching and secrets are mutually exclusive. If I arrive at some conclusion about scripture, I think God's going to appear on Channel 18 and then come in a spaceship and haul us all away. It's a secret until I tell someone.

But if I stand out here like they did last week and get in front of the news cameras and say watch Channel 18 on Thursday because God's going to appear and give a message and then there's going to be a craft come and haul all of us to glory, now it's not a secret. So what does this mean? They will secretly bring in destructive heresies. This is not secret in the sense that nobody gets told.

It is secret in the sense that it's not apparent. It isn't recognizable. People don't recognize it as a heresy.

They don't recognize that they're being given false teaching. This is true in the church today. We have a lot of destructive heresy taught in the church for truth and couched in the language of scripture and glory to God and praise be.

And yet it is a false view of the Christian life. It is a life measured by a false standard. By what you do instead of who you are.

By the impact that you have on others rather than the impact that God has on you. It's a heresy. It's destructive because it diverts us from the calling with which we have been called.

In some cases they will even deny the Lord who bought them. And this is a significant phrase in verse 1. These false teachers among you will secretly bring in destructive heresies even denying the Lord who bought them. The buying here is a reference to the doctrine of redemption.

Now there is, and we have studied in the past, a complexity to the work that Christ accomplished on the cross. He did many things at once because there are many components to our problem with God. As unbelievers, we are sinners.

We have the identity of sinners. We bear the guilt of sin. We bear the guilt of our personal sins as well as the sinfulness that we inherit from Adam.

We are part of a sinful, fallen, corrupt race. We lack relationship with God. We lack righteousness to stand before God.

And any one of these things by itself is sufficient to separate us from God. We also owe the penalty for sin as unbelievers. All of the human race is under the penalty for sin.

At the moment that Adam sins and everybody else, the sins that we commit, the sin of which we partake as members of the human race bears a penalty. And that penalty is death. One component of all of the things that separate us from God was removed for all men at the cross.

And that's the penalty for sin. It's just like when you buy a house or you go to a store and you want to put something in layaway. You put something down.

You say, this is how I'm going to express my commitment to this purchase. I'm going to give you earnest money. I'm serious.

I'm not window shopping here. I intend to make this purchase. And so you commit money.

You put it down. And you say, I'm serious. There's a sense in which God has made a commitment to our salvation.

He has expressed to all men His desire to save us. And He has removed the penalty for sin for the entire human race. And there's a wonderful symmetry to this because you remember all of these different components that separate us from God.

It's been called the barrier. And they're like bricks in a wall. And there's more than one brick.

One of the great misunderstandings about salvation in general is that people think there's just one thing. Well, if Jesus died on the cross for sins, if He died for the sins of the whole world, then everybody is saved. That misunderstands the number of things that separate us from God.

Even with the penalty paid, no longer owing the penalty for sin, we still lack relationship. We still lack righteousness. We still have the problem of guilt.

We still have the problem of corruption. We still have the problem of a lack of power in our lives to live in a way that pleases God. So the fact that Christ has died not for our sins only but also for the sins of the whole world, God does this to express His earnestness, His desire and intent to save everyone.

But, as I said, there's a great symmetry in this also because we are responsible for our personal sins. We commit them. We decide to do them.

We have nobody to blame but ourselves. We are personally responsible for a lot of what separates us from God. We, however, had nothing to do with our guilt in Adam, the thing that first brought us under the penalty of death.

In the day that you eat thereof, you shall surely die. I wasn't there. And people say, well, but if you had been there, you would have.

Well, God doesn't condemn us. God doesn't hold us accountable for what we would have done had we been in a certain circumstance. God holds us personally accountable for what we personally have control over.

We can personally control our choices. We personally control our priorities. We personally control what we personally choose in our personal circumstances.

I wasn't in the garden. I did not reach out and take the fruit. And what I might have done isn't the basis for a condemnation.

So, in the same way that I am involuntarily a participant in Adam's sin, I also involuntarily receive the remission of the penalty for that sin. And so God balances it out. You could argue and say, well, it's not fair that I'm born in sin and I'm born in the fallen, corrupt race of Adam.

But, in a way, God has balanced that because Christ has also paid the penalty for all men

without them having to decide. I didn't decide to be in Adam and I didn't decide to have the penalty of my sin removed. God accomplished the payment of that penalty without anyone choosing it.

The worst unbeliever that ever lived, if there were hot spots in hell, that's where they would be. They're not going there for their sin. Their sin is paid for.

It's been paid for on the cross. It is the other components of the barrier. It is all of the other things.

Lack of relationship. Lack of righteousness. The guilt of personal rebellion against God and refusal to accept the work of the Lord Jesus Christ that remains as an issue that separates man from God.

So, when it says here in 2 Peter 2, verse 1, that they deny the Lord who bought them, this is something beyond that propitiation, beyond the penalty payment of sin that applies to all men. Being purchased, redemption, that's a part of personal salvation. That is something that comes to believers.

Unsaved people who have rejected the Lord Jesus Christ are not redeemed. They are not purchased. They have not been purchased out of the slave market of sin.

Believers have been. And when this says that they deny the Lord who bought them, this identifies them as believers. The Lord is their Lord.

They belong to Him. He has bought them. This is something that takes place at the point of salvation.

It doesn't say denying the Lord who paid for their sin or denying the Lord who propitiated God for their sin. Propitiation is the ministry that John speaks of when he says he is the propitiation for our sins and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. That refers to the payment of the penalty.

This is redemption. And redemption only applies to believers. It's a sad, terrible truth that these false teachers who subtly and in an unidentified way bring in destructive heresies, even to the point of denying Christ, are believers.

They bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. And again, how can the way of truth be blasphemed if it's all unbelievers that are involved? These are believers who follow this crooked way, this destructive way, by covetousness.

And haven't we seen a lot of examples of that in recent years in public ministry? People who are very clearly believers. You can think of these that have gone to prison. You can think of these that have been guilty of sexual misconduct and splashed all over the

headlines in both the local news and the national arena.

What's the problem? Covetousness. Big ministries, lots of money. They start gilding everything and building bigger and larger things and televising and dressing fancy and acquiring and the lure of all of that money and the approbation and the adulation that they receive from people turns them, distracts them by covetousness.

And Paul labels covetousness as idolatry. Something knocks God off of the first line on the priority list. Covetousness, desiring something ahead of desiring to please God, is idolatry.

You might as well just get a rock, carve it into the shape of a little Buddha, set it on the mantle and bow down to it. It's the same thing. You're no better than a pagan if you put something ahead of God.

And that's covetousness, idolatry. By covetousness, verse 3, they will exploit you with deceptive words. The prosperity gospel.

Send in your prayer requests. I'll lay my hands on them and pray for you. I see someone out there with a disjointed elbow.

I see somebody out there with lumbago. Be healed, and so forth. It's deceptive words.

It's a fraud. It's a deception. It has no bearing on God, the Christian life, the Lord Jesus Christ, or His glory, now or in the future.

It's deceptive. For a long time, their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber. And this is designed to be a comfort to us.

It's frustrating. You can imagine. Think of someone that you love dearly.

Someone that you respect, that you hold in high esteem. If someone came in and started spreading lies about that person, slandering them, accusing them of horrible things that had no basis in truth, it hurts you. It makes you angry.

You become indignant, and you want to rise to the defense. You want to correct the record. You want to stop this slander and this terrible wrong that is being done to an innocent person.

It's an issue very close to the heart. What do we do when we see the way of truth blasphemed? What do we see when we see covetousness running rank, and false and ugly things being done and labeled as Christianity? People wrapping themselves in the Bible and doing these terrible things. Some of us say, well, I don't even want to tell people I'm a Christian anymore, because they're going to immediately associate me with this nutcase crowd.

And these abusive and covetous people you see in the media. What do we do when we see this happening? Well, Peter offers comfort. He says, stay calm.

Don't decide that you're going to go on a one-person vendetta, that you're going to go out and try to right this wrong, or put these people in their place, or expose their falsehood, and expose this secret destructive heresy that they're bringing out. He says, don't worry. For a long time their judgment has not been idle.

God hasn't lapsed. His justice didn't go to sleep. God knows.

God sees. Their destruction has not been idle. Their destruction does not slumber.

For if, now we get to the section that applies to our passage in Genesis, if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness to be reserved for judgment, this is what we're going to be studying here a little bit later, and did not spare the ancient world, the generation that we're studying, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemning them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly, and delivered righteous Lot who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked, for that righteous man dwelling among them tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds. Lot was a judge in Sodom. He was a part of the legal system.

He was trying to do his bit to clean up the town and clean up the dealings between people. And then in verse 9 we need to go back to verse 4. If God did not spare all of these, if God has executed judgment in the past, judging those who deserve judgment and sparing and delivering those who are faithful, then, in verse 9, the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment. That's an important concept.

They are reserved for the day of judgment. Don't stand by and wait for the other shoe to drop. Don't stand by and wait for the people purveying these destructive heresies to get their comeuppance in this life.

They often do not. Why do the wicked prosper? Why are the righteous unknown and unloved and unrecognized? And here these rank people seem to be getting all the gravy. Well, don't look for justice.

Don't look for the balancing of the scales and the execution of righteousness and justice in this life. The day of judgment doesn't occur in this life. The day of judgment occurs in the next.

God is keeping track. God has a tally sheet. God knows every word, every thought, every injustice, every injustice that is inflicted on us, every wrong that is done to us.

This is the reason that we quote the verse, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord. And we sit there and we say, Well, I want to see some of that vengeance. I want to see some of that repayment.

I didn't get what I deserved. I was wronged. I was abused.

Or something I love has been wronged or abused. Where is God? We shake our fist to the sky. God, why don't you do something about this? Look at this terrible abuse that's going on.

Peter says, wait. The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations. If you're not being delivered, then there's a reason for you to stay there.

God knows how to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment, and especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust or desire of uncleanness and who despise authority. They are presumptuous and self-willed. They are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries, whereas angels who are greater in power and might do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord.

But these, like natural brute beasts made to be caught and destroyed, speak evil of the things they do not understand and will utterly perish in their own corruption. You hear a lot of this going on in the church today. I bind you, Satan.

I bind the demons that surround us. I bind this demon of depression. I bind this demon of physical problem of whatever sort, this health problem, whatever.

People associate these with demons, and then they run around binding Satan and binding the demons. God has not bound Satan. Satan walks to and fro and up and down in the earth seeking whom he may devour.

Now, if God has chosen not to bind Satan, it is unlikely that because of the prayer of a mixed-up believer, he is suddenly going to bind him. When God binds somebody, they stay bound. When God does bind Satan, if you look over in Revelation, he's going to stay bound for a millennium, for a thousand years.

Satan is not bound and will not be bound until that time. We don't bind Satan and we don't bind demons. That is presumptuous, arrogant, misinformed and ignorant talk.

It is presumptuous and self-willed, and it is arrogant. Angels don't even run around binding each other. They don't bring an accusation before the Lord against other angels or against man, except, of course, for Satan.

But these, like natural brute beasts made to be caught and destroyed, speak evil of things they do not understand. And the implication here is they ought to understand. It's in the Word of God.

They will receive, in verse 13, the wages of unrighteousness as those who count it pleasure to carouse in the daytime. They get pleasure out of this. It gives them a rush to feel like they're binding Satan and that they're manipulating unseen principalities and powers.

That they're players, they're dealers in the big strategic warfare between God and the fallen forces of darkness. And it's completely erroneous. They will receive the wages of unrighteousness as those who count it pleasure to carouse in the daytime.

They are spots and blemishes, carousing in their own deceptions while they feast with you, having eyes full of adultery that cannot cease from sin, enticing unstable souls. They have a heart trained in covetous practices and are accursed children. You'll notice the repetition of that covetousness.

Covetousness, the desire for something, the desire for approbation, the desire for approval, the desire for possessions, desire for fame, desire for recognition. That is one of the strongest impulses in the human soul. We want gratification.

We want satisfaction. And we desire the things that will satisfy us. It's a very strong, compelling, driving motivation.

And apart from the plan of God, apart from God's Word and God's Holy Spirit, we are helpless in the grip of those compulsions. We can't stop them. We can't control them.

It's like being strapped to a bucking horse machine. You can't hit the switch and you can't turn it off. It carries you wherever it wants to go.

We are in the grip of these forces unless God rescues us. They have forsaken the right way and gone astray. And you will notice once again, this is believers.

People tend to ascribe all of this to the world of the lost and unregenerate. But you can't forsake something unless you start out with it. They have forsaken the right way and gone astray.

That means that they were in the right way and were headed straight and left. It reminds us of what Paul says to the Galatians. You were running well.

Who hindered you from obeying the truth? Who deflected you off the right path? They have forsaken the right way. They have gone astray following the way of Balaam the son of Baor. We've looked at the oracles of Balaam not long ago.

Balaam was not an Israelite, but he was a prophet of God. But he loved the wages of unrighteousness. And Balaam, if you follow his career in the Old Testament, he eventually dies the sin unto death.

God finally has to just wipe him out. But he was rebuked for his iniquity. A dumb donkey

speaking with a man's voice restrained the madness of the prophet.

If there's any doubt in your mind that Balaam was a prophet of God, Peter says he was a prophet right here. He delivers these oracles that include the prediction of the coming of Jesus Christ. It would be pretty difficult to make a case that all those words came through an unbeliever.

But these people, in verse 17, are wells without water, clouds carried by a tempest, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. We think, surely this has got to be unbelievers here. How could you have believers that have the blackness of darkness reserved for them? Well, I refer you to our study of the outer darkness.

I refer you to logic that indicates that there's a distinction between a lake of fire and darkness. We've covered that at other times. Verse 18, when they speak great swelling words of emptiness, and this is actually kind of comical if you read it in the Greek.

These great swelling words of emptiness, it's like a soap bubble. It gets bigger and bigger as you blow into it, but all it is is a thin film that surrounds hot air. Great swelling words of emptiness.

They allure through the lusts of the flesh. These people are going to use the same sort of desire that drives them to appeal to others. Covetousness.

What is the attraction of the prosperity gospel? What is the attraction of the charismatic group that appeals to powers over situations and powers over disease? It appeals to power lust. It appeals to people's desire for control. It appeals to people's desire for notoriety, to be looked at and gawked at as a recipient of healing.

It must be something special because you're speaking in tongues and communicating a revelation from God and so forth. It appeals to the very same desires that are driving the false teachers. The lusts of the flesh through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error.

They try to pull people back in who wake up to the emptiness and the error and seduce them back into this error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption. For by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage.

For if, and again, it's clear that this is believers, and one of our strong passages that believers can inherit smoke and believers can have as their portion of inheritance the blackness of darkness, this passage is one of them. Look at verse 20. For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, these are people who have escaped the pollutions of the world.

How do you escape the pollutions of the world? How do you break out of the grip of these strong forces, both internal and external, being seduced on the inside, being

seduced on the outside? How do you escape? Well, these people escaped. They had escaped at one time. They escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

That's what we're doing this morning, studying the Word of God. You escape the pollutions of the world. That's the key that unlocks the door that lets you out of the prison of sin.

But if they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than having known it to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. It would have been better had they never started to learn the Word of God and learned how to escape the pollutions of the world because now you're responsible for that.

You know that there's a better way. You know what the power of God can do. And these people had successfully escaped their culture and their idolatrous practices, their adulterous practices, their former way of life.

They had begun down the road. But what happened? They have been allured, in verse 18, through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness. These false teachers allured the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error.

They had started down the road and they got pulled back in. We have seen this in our local area. Most of us have been a part of a congregation that had gone down the road of learning the Word of God, of escaping the error that plagues the church as far as righteousness by works, righteousness by impact, and so forth.

And yet, many in that group have been allured and brought back into the error that pervades the church. And it's just a biblical fact. It's the truth.

And the latter end is going to be worse than the beginning. This can happen to us in any area of life. We are fortunate.

We are blessed by God in having been given the key to life and been given the key to liberty and freedom from the power of sin. It's the Word of God and the Spirit of God. We know it.

We learn it. We know that there is the teaching of the Word of God not only here, but from many faithful teachers of the Word of God. We can pick up our own Bible and study it and read it.

We can go to God. God has given us the promise. Ask and it shall be given.

Seek and you will find. Knock and the door will be opened to you. It's a promise of God.

If we know that promise and disregard it, forget it, go off in a different direction, this passage will apply to us. After escaping the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end will be worse for us than the beginning. Now what does that mean? What is the beginning? The beginning is where we started out.

We started out in the grip of these things. We responded to the Gospel. We responded to the teaching of the Word of God.

We began to see the way out. We began to escape. And if we then abandon that, the latter end is going to be, we're going to end up worse off than when we started.

Our circumstances will be worse because now we can't plead ignorance. We can't plead that, well, we've never known the way of righteousness. We didn't know what was available by way of power from God.

Now we know and we're willfully disregarding it. That brings additional guilt and additional judgment from God. Now God is actively going to prosecute discipline for His children who are willfully disobedient.

So in addition to all of the bad things that pertain to that life and that lifestyle, now on top of that, we have disciplinary judgment from God. The latter end is worse than the beginning. It would have been better to just continue on in ignorance in the sense of where circumstances are.

Because you accrue additional guilt, now you're guilty not only of your original sins but also of willfully disobeying God and willfully disregarding His gracious provision for escape. It has happened to them in verse 22, according to the true proverb, a dog returns to his own vomit and a sow having washed to her wallowing in the mire. I had a little episode of this really bad show on TV but Patty and I saw a little bit of it about Hercules.

It's just incredibly bad. I'm not sure why we were watching this episode. Maybe just so I would have an illustration this morning.

And I didn't see the beginning of it and we flipped to it waiting for something else. Hercules is walking down a forest path and there's a little pig walking beside him. And he's having a conversation with this pig.

Apparently it's a girl pig. And she's saying, Oh, how much I want to be human. I've always wanted to be human and so forth.

Then Hercules' sister comes along and zaps her with a magic bow and arrow and bing, she's a human. And she says, Oh, this is great. I'm finally a human being.

And of course she's this gorgeously decked out babe and she goes with Hercules and they go into a town. And of course she has, even though she looks like a human being, she has all the thinking of a pig. So when they sit down to eat at the table, she just smashes her face into the food and starts snorting and slopping it up just like a pig would.

They're walking through town and there's a mud puddle over here. And she says, Oh, my favorite thing. And she runs and just jumps right into the middle of it, wallows in the mud.

And I apologize for even bringing up that program. But it is a reminder that if we don't let God transform our nature, we're going to follow the dictates of our sinful nature. And unless we allow God to transform us by His power, unless we stay on the way of escape, the end is going to be worse than the beginning.

We're going to return to our vomit. We're going to return even after having been washed. And once again, this entire chapter from beginning to end is talking about those who have been washed.

They're believers. This can happen to us. We've got to watch out.

This is a warning passage. It's in an epistle written to a church. And it's something that we need to be aware of.

And Peter goes on to say this in chapter 3. Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle, in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets. That's where we started back at the end of chapter 1, wasn't it? We have that prophetic word confirmed which you do well to heed like a light that shines in a dark place. Knowing that these prophetic scriptures weren't invented by man, prophecy never came by the will of man, holy men of God spoke being moved by the Holy Spirit.

These are the words of God. These words carry the power of God. How do you get the power of God in your life? It's through the Spirit of God and the Word of God.

It all comes from God. It's not a man-made technique. It is the living and powerful Word of God.

Peter says, I'm writing all of this to you so that you will be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior. Knowing that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, saying where is the promise of his coming, and so forth. But skip down to verse 17 of chapter 3. You, therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware, lest you also fall from your own steadfastness.

That's the purpose of this warning. Don't fall from your steadfastness. Stick with the Word of God and the Spirit of God.

Don't revert back. Don't fall back into the muck and the mire and the vomit. Beware, lest you fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked.

Well, what's the alternative? What's the key? Continue to do that which provides the way of escape. Grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and forever.

Amen. Well, we've spent the entirety of our first session on our Scripture reading because this is the setting. We want to understand what the situation is in Genesis chapter 6 because this is going to explain everything in that chapter, including the coming of the great flood.

Let's pause here and take our break. When we come back, we'll actually return to our passage in Genesis chapter 5.