

## **II PETER 2**

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to II Peter chapter 2 as we continue our study through the Word of God.

In our last study we looked at a section we called, *CULTIVATE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER* in II Peter chapter 1.

And that Christian character was not based upon the latest fads, or psychobabble, or whatever is popular today. It is based upon God's Word, which can be trusted 100% of the time!

Peter even said that he trusted God's Word more than what he saw with his own eyes because we can be fooled by what we see.

In fact, Peter speaks of the reality of what he saw on the Mount of Transfiguration, that James, John and Peter himself saw the Lord in His glory transfigured before them, and yet, as real as that was, God's Word can be trusted even more!

Now, as we move into chapter 2, Peter is going to deal with false prophets and thus, I have called this section, *CONDEMN FALSE TEACHERS*.

Notice the contrast from the truth found in God's Word and now the false teachers with their false doctrine.

And make no mistake about it, this is very appropriate for us today as we see false teachers rising up within the church and nobody wants to take a stand against them because they want to be tolerant, they want to be loving.

Let me say this, if you are tolerating false teachers with their doctrines of demons you are not showing love for people but are damning their soul to Hell!

Keep in mind that the Devil tried to destroy the church from outside but that did not work too well. He used all kinds of persecution, but the church just got stronger.

Thus, as the old saying goes, *“If you can’t beat them, join them!”* and that is exactly what the Devil has done by bringing in teachers with their false doctrine right into the church!

Jesus warned us in Matthew 7:15 when He said, **“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.”**

Interestingly enough, the Greek word translated **“beware”** means *“to keep on the lookout for, to be alert for, to be on one’s guard against.”*

The warning is clear and yet the church has let false teachers with their false doctrine right into the church and we can clearly see today the effects of not obeying the Lord! And it is not good.

Why in the world do we allow God’s Word to be put down, to be changed, to be added to?

We shouldn’t and I won’t, and I hope you won’t either.

We need to stand up for the truths of God found in the Word of God.

As you will see tonight, Peter won’t stand for false teachers but exposes their lies and shows that they will not get away with anything, God will judge them!

Warren Wiersbe gives us this insight to the deception of these false teachers. He wrote,

One of the most successful rackets in the world today is that of selling “fake art.” Even some of the finest galleries and private collections have been invaded by paintings that are clever counterfeits of the great masters. Publishers have also had their share of hoaxes, purchasing “genuine” manuscripts that weren’t so genuine after all.

But counterfeits are nothing new. Satan is the “great imitator” (2 Cor 11:13-15), and he has been hard at work ever since he deceived Eve in the Garden (Gen 3:1-7; 2 Cor 11:1-4).

He has false Christians (Matt 13:38; John 8:44), a false gospel (Gal 1:6-9), and even a false righteousness (Rom 9:30-10:4). One day, he will present to the world a false Christ (2 Thess 2).

- Warren Wiersbe, The Wiersbe Bible Commentary – NT, p. 938

Now before we get to our text this evening, let’s read what Peter said about God’s trustworthy Word, the Bible starting in verse 19 of II Peter chapter 1.

We are told, “**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; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.**” II Peter 1:19-21.

With that said, let’s begin reading in II Peter chapter 2, starting in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us this evening regarding the condemnation of false teachers who were bringing destructive doctrines into the church back in Peter’s day and they are still doing it today!

## **II PETER 2**

### **VERSE 1**

Make no mistake about it, there are holy men of God who bring forth the truths of God from the Word of God.

And then there are messengers of Satan who speak forth lies and they bring in destructive doctrines that are nothing more than doctrines of demons.

Paul, in II Corinthians 11:13-15 warns us, **“For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.”**

It is as Darby said, *“The Devil is never more satanic than when he carries a Bible.”*

These false prophets and false teachers are wolves dressed in sheep’s clothing and they are deceptive.

They may say a lot of truth, but they mix it with just enough lies to damn a person to Hell!

That is the warning that Jesus gave us in Matthew 7:15-20, **“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them.”**

In other words, don’t be fooled by their dress, by their fancy words, their smooth talking, the degrees they have, but place their teaching alongside of God’s Word to see if it is true. Look at the fruit that is born in their lives, what they are in the ministry for.

Peter will hit on this later on in this chapter and we will cover it more then.

Dr. James Montgomery Boice fills in some details for us about these false teachers who have been around since the church began and they are around today. He wrote,

Do we have false prophets today? Do we have wolves in sheep's clothing? We certainly do.

Moreover, we do not only have them in the pews and the pulpits. We have them in the denominational structures, in the seminaries, and in the church-related colleges.

I find it amusing, in the light of our text, that today we call an academic degree or diploma a sheepskin.

For some professors and ministers clearly cover their intentions with the sheepskins of higher learning while using their knowledge of the Bible and church history to damage the faith of those who listen to them.

We are to be warned against such teachers.

- Dr. James Montgomery Boice

Now here is something that people struggle with. ***“Are you saying that God is going to allow these false teachers, these workers of Satan into the church to become leaders and pastors in Christian churches?”***

That is exactly what I am saying!

***“Why in the world would God allow that to happen, to allow these men to come in with their destructive teachings?”***

This is not God's fault. We have the truths of God found in the Word of God, from Genesis through Revelation to protect us from these deceptions and thus, we have the ability to keep these false teachers with their false doctrines out of the church.

We could have closed the door to them, but we have let them in and now we are suffering the consequences of our actions or inaction!

And we have to understand that these false teachers are not saved. In fact, they will even deny the Lord, His deity, His atonement and-so-on!

Yes, Christ paid the redemption price for their salvation, but they did not appropriate that free gift into their lives. Christ's sacrifice, His death is sufficient to save all, that is what Paul said in I Timothy 2:6. But it is efficient or capable of saving only those who believe! Thus, God's judgment will come upon them!

One last point before we move on and that is from John MacArthur who applies this to what we see happening in the church today. He tells us,

False teachers arise when the church begins to embrace the worldly culture around it. As a result, congregations no longer desire to "endure [hold to] sound [healthy] doctrine."

God-centered worship and preaching is replaced by man-centered antics and entertainment.

A biblical emphasis on sin, repentance, and holiness is replaced by an emphasis on self-esteem and felt needs.

People look for teachers who proclaim only pleasant, positive ideas "in accordance to their own desires" because they want "to have their ears tickled."

As a result, these popular teachers (whom "they will accumulate for themselves") will "turn" the minds of the people from the truth, leaving them vulnerable to Satan's deceptive influence.

- John MacArthur

That is exactly what we see happening and thus, many churches, denominations have become the last days church, the Lukewarm Church or the apostate church of the last days!

## VERSE 2

Make no mistake about it, and I have touched on this already, but false teachers have always been around, that really is not the issue.

The real issue is that so many will follow their destructive ways!

In fact, “**destructive ways**” is the Greek word ASELGEIAIS, which speaks of habitual sexual immorality and unrestrained, depraved conduct.

They rejected the truth of God and are given over to fleshly passions, they are out of control.

And look at the sexual sins we see false teaches involved in!

And we see what they teach, their congregations, their followers, are doing and thus, we see that these sins that the world is involved in, the church is also doing them at close to the same rate. That should not be. We are to grow in holiness but that is not taught and thus, what is manifested in their lives are the unrestrained fleshly lifestyles!

Also, as they speak these destructive doctrines, as their lifestyles are ungodly, God’s name is dishonored, it is disgraced because they are supposed to be men and women of God, but of course they are not. But the unsaved don’t know that.

And “**the way of truth**” is the Gospel message and that has been replaced with another gospel, a false gospel, and it leads people down a path of “**swift destruction.**”

Let me share this with you and you will see how people are willing to follow what they want instead of who they need in their lives, Jesus and His Word!

We are told,

In October 1855, at a time when society's views on the nature of biblical authority and human freedom were evolving and subject to change, Vincent Van Gogh, the wildly talented yet tortured artist, completed an oil on canvas and titled it *Still Life with Bible*.

Looking at it, one observes a table, and upon the table an open Bible. To the right of God's Word is a candle, burned out, standing in its holder. In the foreground the artist has painted a small yellow book. The print on the binding is still legible – it is Emile Zola's *The Joy of Life*.

By placing a burned-out candle beside the Bible and by putting both in the background, van Gogh is telling us that the time for walking through this world by the illumination of the Holy Spirit, who shines down upon God's Word, is past.

Biblical authority no longer holds sway. People are guided by different, if not lesser lights. That is what he is saying. Even the flaming color of yellow is now reserved for the cover of another book. Humanity's new pursuit is governed by whatever brings us *the joy of life*.

Interestingly, that which van Gogh painted in oils in 1855, Peter had already pictured and commented on centuries ago.

Like us, the aging apostle lived in a day when the light of God's Word seemed to be in danger of being snuffed out and extinguished altogether. People were following another path, carried along by a candle of a different sort.

- David R. Helm, 1 & 2 Peter and Jude, p. 223



What a warning to us today that we stand strong in the faith that has been entrusted to us and we don't embrace or follow these false teachers with their false doctrines, I don't care who they are! We follow Jesus Christ and His Word and that is it!

And notice what Peter says next, the motivation that they have for bringing forth these false teachings.

### VERSE 3

What is the focus of the false gospel that is being preached today?

It is self-gratification; it is all about what they can get from it as they share it with you!

Thus, they use deceptive words to make a profit, to make money off of people.

And we see that so much today as they exploit or make merchandise of ignorant people, gullible people and they do this by using "**deceptive**" words!

Let me show you what this word means. This word comes from the Greek word PLASTOS and our English word, plastic is derived from this word!

And, as we know, plastic is something that you can mold into any shape you want.

What is my point?

My point is this. These false teachers are molding and shaping God's Word into what they want it to say so they can make money off of God's people!

And it is amazing at how Christians are taken in by these charlatans and they give their money to them. Look at some of these mansions some of these pastors are living in. The jets they have. The cars that they have. And people keep on giving.

They are in the business to make money, not to serve the Lord Jesus Christ!

Remember in Matthew 21:12-13 we are told, **“Then Jesus went into the temple of God and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. And He said to them, ‘It is written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer,’ but you have made it a ‘den of thieves.’”**”

That truly needs to be done today.

But where is the judgment for these false teachers?

Peter tells us that their judgment is coming, they will be dealt with and he gives us examples of God’s judgment coming upon these false teachers, these workers of iniquity in the next few verses and he takes it right out of the book of Genesis.

He is going to look at the judgment upon fallen angels, the wicked at the time of the flood, and the people of Sodom and Gomorrah.

You see, the point is that none will escape the judgment of God, He will pour out His vengeance upon those that oppose Him, and none will escape, including these false teachers who are deceiving people with their false doctrine!

#### VERSES 4-6

Here we see three groups of people that God brought judgment upon because of the false teaching, the immorality, the wickedness that they brought upon the people of this world. And the point being is that God is going to judge false teachers, not might!

First of all, Peter deals with these fallen angles!

Who are these angels that sinned?

Obviously they are the ones who rebelled with Lucifer or Satan, but it goes even farther than that. You see, not all those fallen angels are chained, for Satan has his demons or fallen angels at work now.

Then who are these angels that are chained in *TARTARUS* or the lowest Hell awaiting judgment?

In Genesis 6:1-2 we are told, **“Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose.”**

The Living Bible puts these verses like this, **“Now a population explosion took place upon the earth. It was at this time that beings from the spirit world looked upon the beautiful earth women and took any they desired to be their wives.”**

That phrase, **“sons of God”** is used in the Scriptures to refer to angels and in this case, fallen angels. We see this in Job 1:6, where we are told, **“Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them.”**

The Living Bible puts this verse like this, **“One day as the angels came to present themselves before the Lord, Satan, the Accuser, came with them.”**

The phrase **“sons of God”** is speaking of angels and I believe that is what is being spoken of in Genesis chapter 6.

The Bible does not say that angels can't have sexual relations, but in heaven, they don't.

Jude is going to expound on this more, but the implication is that these angels did not keep their proper domain and they co-habitated with women producing *NEPHILLIM* or fallen ones.

Satan was trying to contaminate the human race so that the Messiah could not be born from the seed of a woman.

And that is interesting to me because in Genesis 6:9 we are told, **“This is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God.”**

I believe this is not only speaking of Noah living a life that was pleasing to God, but also his family was not corrupted with the fallen angels infecting his gene pool you might say.

In other words, we are told that he was **“perfect in his generations”** or that he was pure in his genetic profile!

And look at this judgment that came, first upon these fallen angels that co-habituated with women. These angels are now chained in Tartarus awaiting their final judgment.

Now, before they are judged I believe God is going to use them as part of His judgment on a Christ rejecting world during the Tribulation Period and you can read of these demon locusts from the bottomless pit in Revelation chapter 9. I think that is what Peter is speaking of when he says that they are reserved for judgement, a judgment against a Christ rejecting world and God will use them accordingly. We will deal more with that as we get to the book of Revelation in a few months.

Then, in II Peter 2:5 we see the next judgment come, related to what we just read here in this judgment about these fallen angels, and that is the judgment of the ancient world!

Now, why did God judge the ancient world?

Genesis 6:5 tells us, **“Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”**

You see, the human race was contaminated with sin and these fallen angels who co-habituated with women, except for Noah and his family who found grace before God and were saved through the flood.

Now before the flood waters came, Noah was a preacher of righteousness, and for 120 years he spoke of the coming judgment to the people and they ignored him, went about their daily lives, refusing to listen until the judgment came, the floods destroyed them!

And there is a judgment of God coming soon, and the world is blind to what is coming, they too have shut their ears to what the Lord has warned them!

Now let me speak about this flood for just a minute because there are many today who believe this flood was just a local flood, it did not cover the face of the earth.

The Greek word for “**flood**” that Peter uses is KATAKLUSMOS, (kat-ak-looce-mos’) and from it we get our English word “*cataclysm.*”

Now what evidence do we have for a global flood?

There are billions of dead things, buried in rock layers, laid down by water, all over the earth! I thank Ken Ham for that one. Simple and yet it says it all!

The evidence for a global flood is everywhere and if it was not global but just a local flood, then God lied, for He said He would not destroy the earth by a flood again and He put a rainbow in the sky to remind us of His covenant with us.

If it was just a local flood, we see local floods all the time, but God is not a liar, He can’t lie, it is not part of His nature and thus, this was a global flood!

And then, in II Peter 2:6 we see the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. And Peter tells us that this is an example of what will happen if you live like they did, ungodly! I think we are there in this nation and I believe judgment is at the door! Let me show you what I mean.

Today the sanctity of marriage in our nation is being weighed in the balances. The push for gay rights, for homosexual and lesbian marriages is being pushed upon us so that it may be accepted.

And this world is rotting away. I know, some of you may not agree with that, but listen to a new children's TV show in Denmark, ages 4 to 8! Please forgive me for this, but it is about a man who has large genitals and the amazing things he can do with it! How depraved have we become! And many are supporting this abomination, not coming against it. Are you kidding me?

And Peter is telling us not to forget Sodom and Gomorrah, how homosexuality flourished in that society and God brought judgment upon them, completely wiping those cities off the face of the earth. Learn the lesson, if you want to live that lifestyle, judgment will come!

Notice the scope of God's judgment in these three examples.

He judged fallen angels – none are too lofty to be judged!

He judged the ancient world where there could have been over 5 billion people living at that time – none are too numerous to be judged!

And He judged Sodom and Gomorrah and their sexual sins – none are too base to be judged!

Thus, Peter's point is just as judgment came upon these people, God will judge false teachers, they will not escape!

But what about the righteous, what happens to them?

Peter spoke of how God delivered Noah and his family at the time of the flood but now he is going to expound on how God knows how to deliver the godly from His judgment and punish those that deserve it!

VERSES 7-9

Did you hear that? Peter tells us that Lot was “**righteous.**”

Now when you read of the story of Lot in Genesis you would never come to the conclusion that he was a righteous man.

You may remember the story. Abraham’s nephew was Lot and Abraham was watching over him as they traveled. But their herds were getting too big and they needed to separate, and Abraham told Lot to pick the area he wanted to live in, and he would go in another area.

So Lot saw Sodom, it was beautiful, the lust of the eyes. He coveted the land of Sodom, the lust of the flesh. And Lot took Sodom for his home, the pride of life.

The problem with this city was its wickedness, the sexual immorality, the homosexuality that seemed to be practiced by most of the people of the city.

And Peter tells us that these conditions tormented or oppressed his soul. But that did not change his behavior.

The problem for Lot is that he failed to separate himself and his family from this ungodly living. And in the end, he lost everything because he was so closely associated with these things and his family couldn’t let go!

As the angels warned Lot of the coming judgment, he tried to tell his sons-in-law, but they thought he was joking, “***The judgment of God, get real!***” and they died in the judgment!

His wife, as they left the city she looked back and turned into a pillar of salt.

And his two daughters who came out with him, they got him drunk and had sex with him, bearing children, who became the Moabites and Ammonites, enemies of the children of Israel.

For Lot himself, the angles had to pull him out of the city, he didn’t want to let go.

In other words, don't let the world or the things of this world have a grip on your life like that! What is Peter's point here?

His point is simple. God knows how to deliver the righteous from His judgment and He will punish the wicked!

Now, in saying that, there are some people who believe that we as Christians will go through part or all of the 7-year Tribulation Period.

I don't believe that is what the Scriptures are teaching us.

You see, we do have tribulation in this world but that is not from God, that is from Satan.

But when God pours out His wrath on a Christ rejecting world, like with Sodom, God knows how to deliver the godly out, like Lot, and judge the ungodly!

Before the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed, the pre-requisite to this destruction was that Lot had to be out.

In Genesis 19:22 we are told that the angel said to Lot, **“Hurry, escape there. For I cannot do anything until you arrive there.’ . . .”**

And in Revelation 3:10 Jesus said to the faithful church, His Bride, **“Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from [out of] the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.”**

You see, the judgment is upon the earth dwellers, and we are citizens of heaven, this is not our home.

Thus, we will be kept out of this trial that is coming upon those who have rejected Christ and before that takes place, we will be caught up to be with the Lord, the Rapture will occur because, **“the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment.”** II Peter 2:9.



Let me make one more point before we move on.

Remember that at the time of the flood, spoken of in Genesis, there were three groups of people mentioned. I know, *“What do you mean three?”* Let me explain.

*First of all, there were the unbelievers who perished in the Flood!*

*Then there was Noah and his family who were preserved through the Flood!*

*And we need to also remember that Enoch was there at this period of time, and Enoch was taken to heaven before the Flood!*

What is my point?

The point is this. The Tribulation Period is another judgment that is coming upon the whole world, and I believe we once again see that the Scriptures talk about three groups of people in relation to this event. Again, let me explain.

*First of all, there are the unbelievers who will perish in this Judgment!*

*Then, there are believing Jews who will be preserved through this Judgment, the 144,000 sealed by God! (Also, within this group are Jew and Gentile believers who many are going to be martyred for their faith!)*

*But the last group is the Church who will be raptured before the Judgment!*

Keep in mind that Enoch was not taken up by God at the midpoint of the flood, or post flood, but prior to the flood, just as the church is taken up before the Tribulation Period begins!

Why is that? Because **“the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment.”** II Peter 2:9.

VERSES 10-11

False teachers are proud, they are arrogant, they despise authority.

Case in point, Benny Hinn who I can say is a false prophet, a false teacher and when anyone challenges what he is saying he attacks back. Listen to what he has to say to those who come against him. And we have not heard a lot from him lately but listen to his justification. He said,

You wonderful people of God, quit attacking men of God by name! Somebody's attacking me because of something I'm teaching! Let me tell you something brother, you watch it! . . . I don't mind if they attack Benny and the way he is and the way he walks, but don't attack this man of God [Paul Crouch]. There is a group here in California that thinks they are the judgment seat of Christ! They judge everything you do. Listen here, fella, let me tell you something: you're not my judge; Jesus is my judge! You walk around with your stiff lip and collar on your neck – dear God in Heaven I wish I could just – ooh!

They call it a ministry, my foot! You know, I've looked for one verse in the Bible – I just can't seem to find it – one verse that says, “If you don't like 'em, kill 'em!” I really wish I could find it! But there's nowhere in the Bible where it says it! . . .

Sometimes I wish God would give me a Holy Ghost machine gun! I'd blow your head off!

- “Praise the Lord” Program on TBN, Nov. 9, 1990

Now, just a few of his false prophecies that people don't hold him accountable for but continue to send in their money to support him.

On TBN's Praise the Lord program Benny Hinn had a prophecy from God that if your loved one dies, instead of taking them to the mortician, the funeral home, prop them up in front of the television and turn on TBN and God will raise them from the dead. I guess you have to be brain dead to watch it! How foolish and where is the accountability in making a prophecy like that?

But that is not the first or last time that Benny Hinn has prophesied falsely. Way back in 1989 he prophesied to his congregation at the Orlando Christian Center in Florida what he was seeing for the decade of the 1990's.

"The Lord also tells me to tell you in mid 90's – about '94 or '95, no later than that – God will destroy the homosexual community of America . . . He will destroy it with fire."

"The Spirit of God tells me – an earthquake will hit the east coast of America and destroy much in the 90's."

"The Spirit tells me – Fidel Castro will die in the 90's . . . Holy Spirit just said to me, it'll be worse than any death you can imagine."

In regard to giving more money so the Lord will not take his life away, he said:

"Now some of you will have to step out in faith tonight. You may not even have the money right now. In fact, most times you make a pledge you don't even have it."

Then came his warning to those that might question him, the skeptics.

"You know, you do not get under this kind of anointing I get under just because you sing hallelujah. There's a heavy price and I would not want to be in the shoes of the one who touches the anointing. Don't touch the anointing!"

"I'm giving you a prophetic word. You know the scripture says they prospered because they obeyed his prophets. I'm telling you tonight, I'm speaking prophetically. Obey the Lord!"

Now, just in case you don't have the cash, Hinn has the solution, liquidate!

"You know if I was you and God spoke to me like this, I'd take it out of my investments to give it to God now cause it's already spring and the year 2000 is almost next door."

You see, it is as Peter said, "**By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words . . .**" II Peter 2:3a.

The amazing thing is, many follow their destructive ways, their false doctrine and folks, we are accountable before God.

Like I have said, we have the truth of God in the Word of God to expose these lies, this darkness and if we don't God will hold us accountable! We will fall prey to their deception!

Peter is also speaking of what we see going on in the so-called "*spiritual warfare*" movement where they do battle with Satan and his demons.

We see in the ultra- charismatic movement these false prophets who are making fortunes off of people as they are supposedly binding and damming Satan and his demons, as if they had the power.

Jude tells us, "**Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, 'The Lord rebuke you!' But these speak evil of whatever they do not know; and whatever they know naturally, like brute beasts, in these things they corrupt themselves.**" Jude 9-10.

And yet these people filled with pride are casting out demons over here, stomping on them over there as if they had the power to do that.

Folks, our victory is in Jesus and I will let Him deal with Satan.

I will submit to God and in doing so I am resisting the Devil, his influence upon my life, and he will flee!

Remember the story in Acts 19:13-16 of the Jewish exorcists. We are told, **“Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists took it upon themselves to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, ‘We exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches.’ Also there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, ‘Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?’ Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.”**

We are not to bring reviling accusations, scorn them, put them down but let God deal with them because vengeance is His and He will judge them!

Puritan John Owen wrote this in regard to the truths of God,

It is incumbent on them [pastors] to preserve the truth or doctrine of the gospel received and professed in the church, and to defend it against all opposition. This is one principal end of the ministry. . . . And the sinful neglect of this duty is that which was the cause of the most pernicious heresies and errors that have infested and ruined the church.

Those whose duty it was to preserve the doctrine of the gospel entire in the public profession of it have, many of them ‘spoken perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.’

Bishops, presbyters, public teachers, have been the ringleaders in heresies. Wherefore this duty, especially at this time, when the fundamental truths of the gospel are on all sides impugned, from all sorts of adversaries, is in an especial manner to be attended unto.

- Cited in J. I. Packer, A Quest for Godliness, p. 64

VERSES 12-13a

I like the way that Barclay sums this up for us. He tells us, ***“What these evil men, who were troubling Peter’s people, were doing, was to say that they loved and served Christ, while the things they taught and did were a complete denial of him.”***

Exactly.

Now, let me ask you this. What is the difference between the saved and the unsaved person? Peter tells us here.

The saved person is controlled or guided by the spirit and the unsaved person by the lusts of the flesh.

Thus, Peter’s conclusion here is these unsaved false teachers are like animals, controlled by the flesh, controlled by their lustful desires and not by the Spirit of God! And they can go on and do as they please, but they also need to understand that God’s judgment is coming, and they will not escape!

VERSES 13b-16

As you can see, Peter doesn’t hold back but lists the sins of these false teachers whose focus is self-gratification!

They are a stain, a flaw, pretending to be workers of Christ but in reality, they are not.

They attend the love feasts and pretend to be one of the brethren as they deceive and are being deceived.

Their sensual lusts are out of control as they look at women with the idea of committing adultery with them.

And because of their position and their lifestyles, they get others to follow them down this destructive path.

They have forsaken the right way, which is a metaphor that is speaking of obeying God.

Remember what Jesus said in Matthew 7:21-27, **“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’ Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.”**

You see, it is not just empty words, but a relationship that is manifested in our life, in the things we do. It is obedience to the Lord, not out of the Law but out of love. It is not doing your own thing, but what God has called you to do.

And the example that Peter gives to us is that of Balaam.

Balaam was a prophet who was motivated by financial gain. Thus, when Balak, the King of Moab saw the armies of Israel, when he heard of how God was for them and giving them victories, he hires Balaam to pronounce a curse upon the Jews.

At first, God told Balaam not to go but he persuaded God to let him go and God was not pleased.

On the way Balaam's donkey stops and would not move any farther. You see, the Angel of the Lord stood in front with His sword drawn and the donkey saw what Balaam didn't, his eyes were blinded by greed, the love of money!

And finally, the Lord did open Balaam's eyes, and we are told in Numbers 22:35, **“Then the Angel of the LORD said to Balaam, ‘Go with the men, but only the word that I speak to you, that you shall speak.’ So Balaam went with the princes of Balak.”**

Thus, as he comes to Balak, instead of pronouncing a curse he pronounces blessings upon the Jewish people.

Even though Balaam didn't curse the Jews, he gave Balak instructions on how he could get God to curse them. He told them to send their women into the camp, dress them up looking sexy and then they were to marry them. And then they could get them involved in the pagan activities, into sexual immorality and God would take care of the rest!

Balaam thought he could do as he pleased, to make a profit for himself and in the end, it cost him his life.

We are told in Numbers 31:8, **“They killed the kings of Midian with the rest of those who were killed - Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba, the five kings of Midian. Balaam the son of Beor they also killed with the sword.”**

In the depravity of those false teachers comes the judgment of God and that is no different today!

And sometimes it takes a donkey to restrain the madness of these false prophets – but sadly, many in the church today refuse to stand up and be heard. They allow these lies to continue on, but God will finally put an end to it! He will judge them!



VERSE 17

Peter's point is simple. The words, the teachings of these false prophets are empty, there is nothing to them.

Their teachings do not bring forth light, they are not refreshing, there is no spiritual nourishment you can glean from them, there is no life to them but only blackness!

And yet, people are tragically drawn to them.

It is as the Lord said in Jeremiah 2:13, **“For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, And hewn themselves cisterns - broken cisterns that can hold no water.”**

I like the way that William MacDonald put it in regard to Peter's statement about false teachers and what they give to people. He wrote,

*They speak great swelling words of emptiness*, or as Knox translates it, they use “fine phrases that have no meaning.” This is an accurate description of the words of many liberal preachers and false cultists. They are accomplished orators, holding audiences spellbound by their grandiose rhetoric. Their erudite [scholarly] vocabulary attracts undiscerning people. What their sermons lack in content, they make up for in a dogmatic, forceful presentation. But when they have finished they have said nothing.

- William MacDonald

Let me give you an example of this from Lenard Sweet. He is an Emerging Church author and speaker who is really a New Ager dressed in sheep's clothing. Listen to what he said.

The first of these five untheorized observations is that New Light embodiment means to be "in connection" and "in-formation" with other Christians. Deeper feeling and higher relating go together. The church is fundamentally one being, one person, a comm-union whose cells are connected to one another within the information network called the Christ consciousness.

New Lights offer up themselves as the cosmions of a mind-of-Christ consciousness. As a cosmion incarnating the cells of a new body, New Lights will function as transitional vessels through which transforming energy can renew the divine image in the world, moving postmoderns from one state of embodiment to another.

- Lenard Sweet, Catalyst Conference

### ***WHAT??????????***

I guess Peter was right, nothing more than great swelling words of emptiness and who knows what is being said. But, like the emperor's new clothes, no one wants to admit they have no idea what he is talking about!

Let me ask you this. What is the allure or attraction of these false teachers?

Peter tells us that in the next few verses.

### **VERSES 18-19**

Isn't that what we see in churches today! Trying to minister to people's flesh, make them feel good about living in sin. And they use big, fancy, flashy words but in the end, they are empty because only God's Word can bring forth life in us.

How do you catch a fish?

By using the right bait and you can hook them and that is what these false teachers are doing, appealing to the flesh and people are getting hooked!

Yes, they may say that they are giving you liberty, freedom but that is never found in the flesh. Only Jesus can set us free from the bondage of sin and if you don't seek Jesus, if He is not your Lord and Savior, then you will be a slave of corruption, you will remain in bondage to sin!

Make no mistake about this, these teachers and their doctrines are deadly!

A perfect example of how something that may look beautiful can be deadly is seen in the Judas tree that has beautiful red flowers that attract bees.

The only problem is that the nectar contains an opiate that is deadly to the bees.

And so, as you look at the base of these trees you will find hundreds of bees that have been put to sleep by the beauty of this tree and in the end, it cost them their lives!

The same is true with these false teachers, they are charismatic, they are colorful, but look at the destroyed lives, look at the lives lost because of their deadly teaching!

It is as we are told in John 8:31-36, **“Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, ‘If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.’ They answered Him, ‘We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can You say, “You will be made free”?’ Jesus answered them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.’”**

They were blind to the bondage that they were in because they refuse to see the light that Jesus had for them and thus, they were not free.

VERSES 20-22

In other words, the more you know the more you are accountable!

Now Peter is not saying that a person can lose their salvation, that is not what the Scriptures teach.

Then what is he saying?

He is speaking of people who knew the truth, they may have even said they embraced the truth, but as you look at their lives you can see they are far from it.

They were not a Jesus branch but a Judas branch, a false believer. And remember that Jesus said back in Matthew 7:23, “**... ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’**”

And Peter illustrates this point by speaking of a dog who has vomited the corruption that was inside of him but then, because of his nature, he goes sniffing around that vomit and then he licks it back up, he takes it back in.

Then Peter speaks of a pig, who is cleaned up, looks nice and you let him outside and he goes right back to the mud and gets dirty because that is his nature.

But we are not like that, we have a new nature in Christ and Paul makes that point for us in II Corinthians 5:17, “**Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.**”

We have seen this evening the condemnation of false teachers. Thus, may we expose them and not embrace their doctrines of demons.

As I close this evening, let me leave you with these words from John MacArthur who said,

Contemporary Christianity, sadly, contains many people like the ones Peter describes in this passage. They have sought personal improvement and moral reformation in their quests for spiritual and religious experience. Many of them have become teachers, preachers, and self-styled prophets within the professed church.

Tragically, like dirty dogs or unclean pigs, they eventually return to their old lifestyles – rejecting the only One who can truly reform them. Those who become spiritual leaders are in reality false teachers, motivated by their own selfish pursuits and sensual desires. In view of their appalling character and damning influence, Peter’s warning is clear: Stay away from false teachers and expose them!

Believers are to listen to the true apostles and prophets, not the false ones.

- John MacArthur

May we heed the warning!