

**II PETER 2:1-3**  
**THE DANGER OF FALSE TEACHERS!**

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to II Peter chapter 2 as we continue our in-depth study of this letter that Peter wrote to the scattered persecuted church.

This chapter deals with false teachers and Peter is warning the people he was writing to, and he is writing to us through the guidance or inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Peter has told us in II Peter chapter 1 that we are to grow in Christ. That we are to pursue the things of God and not be shortsighted in our walk thinking that the past life we had is better than what we have in Christ.

And last time we looked at the sure Word of God or the Bible and how we can trust the Word of God!

In fact, Peter tells us that the Word of God is more sure than what he saw with his own eyes. What was he specifically speaking of? He was speaking of seeing Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration, there on Mount Hermon, and He stood there in all of His glory, that is what Peter saw!

Peter's point is that when God speaks about prophetic events, the future and what He has for us now, not just foretelling but forthtelling as well, we can trust it with 100% confidence.

Listen again to what Peter wrote in II Peter 1:19-21, **“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.”**

Now, since we have the Word of God, the Bible, from Genesis through Revelation and we can trust it, we also need to be aware of the false teachers that are out there with their false doctrine.

How do you tell the fake from the real or the lie from the truth?

Let me share this with you and you will see how you tell the real from the false.

We are told,

A Chinese boy who wanted to learn about jade went to study with a talented old teacher.

This gentle man put a piece of the precious stone into his hand and told him to hold it tight.

Then he began to talk of philosophy, men, women, the sun and almost everything under it.

After an hour he took the stone and sent the boy home.

The procedure was repeated for several weeks.

The boy became frustrated. When would he be told about the jade?

He was too polite, however, to question the wisdom of his venerable teacher.

Then one day, when the old man put a stone into his hands, the boy cried out instinctively, ***“That’s not jade!”***

- H. Robinson, Biblical Preaching

I truly believe that is why the so-called Christian movements take people away from God's Word or bring them to a translation of the Bible that does not follow what the Greek or Hebrew text is saying.

By dumbing people down regarding the Bible, you can get them to believe anything and that is what we are seeing today!

You can spend a lifetime with all the false teaching that is out there, but when you know the truth and you hear false teaching, you can yell out, "***Hey, that is not from the Bible!***"

Please understand that it was important for Peter to let us know we can trust God's Word before he tells us not to trust these false teachers!

One writer put it like this. He wrote,

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 Helm, 1 & 2 Peter and Jude, Sharing Christ's Sufferings, p. 223

I see that today here in America where there is not a desire to know God through His Word but there is a desire to find – ***THE JOY OF LIFE!***

Let me say this. I don't care what you try to do to find that joy of life, you will never find it apart from Christ.

Yes, you can have pleasure for a time but think about the bait that you took to obtain it and understand that the Devil is there to steal, kill and destroy your life! So this pleasure is short-lived because it is not of God, you have obtained it outside of the Lord!

What are we to do?

Just what the Lord told the Southern Kingdom of Judah to do through the prophet Jeremiah.

We are told in Jeremiah 6:16, **“Thus says the Lord: Stand in the ways and see, And ask for the old paths, where the good way is, And walk in it; Then you will find rest for your souls. But they said, “We will not walk in it.””**

As you read this you see the love of God for a sinful people and then you see the response of the people to what God has said.

And to me, this is a very sad statement by the people of God.

All God told them that they needed to do was so simple. He told them, “**... ask for the old paths, where the good way is, And walk in it; Then you will find rest for your souls.**”

In other words, go back to the Word of God, follow the paths that have been established by God and you will find rest.

What a loving God we have.

But how did they respond?

They responded to Him by saying, “**We will not walk in it.**”

That is a hard heart. God has what is best for our lives and we need to not only listen but obey!

And today, as you look at the Church, we have a large group of people that are trying to re-emerge the Church, find new ways and they are doing this apart from God and His Word.

Now that may sound harsh, but it is true.

If you are doing things, embracing doctrine that is contrary to God’s Word then you are wrong!

And because of that we are embracing all kinds of sin in the church, and we are not even embarrassed about it, we rejoice in it and that is tragic!

All these new things, new teachings don’t make it good or right! Keep this in mind. If it is new, it is not true, and if it is true, it is not new!

God’s Word is complete!

Not only did God tell them to go back to the old paths, go back to the Word of God but He also told them that He has set watchmen over them to warn them of the coming danger, the coming judgment and they responded, **“We will not listen.”**

Sounds like little kids trying to get their way and, in the end, they will lose!

And people today also laugh at the judgment of God coming, even some in the church.

But Peter warns us that this will happen in the last days.

He said in II Peter chapter 3, **“knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, ‘Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.’ . . . But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.”** II Peter 3:3-4, 10.

Judgment is coming against a Christ rejecting world and it doesn’t matter if people agree with that or not, God’s Word will come to pass!

And, as we will see next time, these false teachers with their false doctrine will be judged, as well as those who follow after them!

I want you to 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, as I have said, 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.

Warren Wiersbe gives us this insight into 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

I have called our study this morning – ***THE DANGER OF FALSE TEACHERS!***

Make no mistake about it, these false teachers are bringing a false Gospel into the lives of many, and they are leading people not to heaven but to Hell!

I have broken down the verses we will be looking at this morning into the following main points. They are,

***DESTRUCTIVE HERESIES – II PETER 2:1***

***FOLLOWERS OF DESTRUCTIVE HERESIES – II PETER 2:2***

***THE GAIN OF DESTRUCTIVE HERESIES – II PETER 2:3***

With that as our introduction, let's begin reading in II Peter chapter 2, starting in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word and look at this topic - ***THE DANGER OF FALSE TEACHERS!***

## **II PETER 2**

### **VERSE 1**

As we have seen, Peter just finished speaking of the holy men of God who were moved by the Holy Spirit to bring forth God's Word!

And now Peter is warning us that there are not just holy men of God who are bringing forth the truths of God, but there are also unholy men who are moved by unholy spirits that bring forth distorted truths to God's Word and they even deny the Lord!

We should not be surprised by this because Paul warned us that these men “**speaking doctrines of demons.**” (I Timothy 4:1)

Not only did Paul warn us but Peter warns us here that “**They bring damning heresies.**” (2 Peter 2:1)

Not only Paul and Peter, but John also warned us that “**Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.**” (I John 4:1)

And even Jude warns us by saying, “**Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.**” (Jude 3-4)

Make no mistake about it, during their day there were holy men of God who brought forth the truths of God from the Word of God as there has been throughout church history!

But then there were and are messengers of Satan who speak forth lies and they bring in destructive doctrines that are nothing more than doctrines of demons, as I have said.

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 what Peter is speaking of here, how destructive these teachings are!

And 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.

But think about this because so many Christians don't even want to talk about it, they don't want to even acknowledge it, but we need to because Jesus warned that false prophets were coming!

Paul told us they were coming!

Peter warned us they were coming!

And then Jude said they're here and that they "**crept into the church unnoticed.**" (Jude 4)

Now let me ask you this. How did these false teachers creep into the church unnoticed when Christians back then had been given so many clear warnings they were coming?

Because of gullible and undiscerning pastors and church leaders who were looking for what "*works*" or what was "*novel*" or simply who were taken in by the "*cult of personality*" just trying to be cool, upbeat, charming so they will be liked but they were not discerning nor being vigilant.

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.

This is what 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! So I guess the reality is, God didn’t let them in, we did!

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 writer 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 where Jesus is outside knocking for them to open the door and let Him in!

Now let me also say this. There are damning heresies and there are undamning heresies.

What do I mean by that?

First of all, what is heresy?

Greek scholar Marvin Vincent explains it like this, “*A heresy is, strictly, the choice of an opinion contrary to that usually received.*”

And like I have said, there are two kinds of heresies you might say.

The damning heresies will send a person to hell because they deny the atonement that is only found in Jesus. They deny His Deity, His shed blood that cleanses us from our sin and the like.

The undamning heresies are those things that won't send you to hell, but they are not found in the Bible, or they are just teachings were the Scriptures have been twisted to make them say what they want them to say instead of what God wants them to say!

An example of something people say and is not in the Bible is, “*God helps those who help themselves.*” That is not a damning heresy, but it is not in the Bible.

Again, notice here in II Peter that they are “denying the Lord who bought them.”

That Greek word for “bought” is *AGORAZO* means “*to purchase*” or “*to redeem out of the marketplace*” and was used of purchasing slaves out of the slave-market.

In other words, they are denying the Lord's redemption, what He did for us and thus, their outcome is that they will “bring on themselves swift destruction.”

In other words, they are not saved!

Now we see that the cults deny who Jesus is and thus, they are not saved and yet they will go around with their false doctrine, and some will even allow these cults into their church.

Some of these cults are Jehovah Witnesses, Mormons, Christian Science, Zen Buddhism, Worldwide Church of God, Scientology, Eastern Religions, Islam, and sorry, even Catholicism because they believe in Jesus, but it is not the Jesus of the Bible. Their Jesus did not pay for all your sins and thus, you must go to Purgatory to pay for them and then you will get to heaven. It is a Jesus plus works salvation and that is a doctrine of demons!

And there are more, and some of these are so obvious but the warning now is that within the church itself we see these doctrines of demons being promoted.

I will give you an example of how destructive these teachings are, and I can spend a lifetime on this, but it will not be beneficial to you. But I want you to see how deceptive they are with these things.

You have probably heard of this version of the Bible that is authored by Eugene Peterson. It is called *The Message!*

This version is described as a “*contemporary rendering of the Bible from the original languages, crafted to present its tone, rhythm, events, and ideas in everyday language.*”

Now in saying that, it seems good, but this paraphrased version of the Bible is nothing more than Eugene Peterson’s thoughts and views and not God’s!

I will give you one example of how he distorts the Scriptures.

In John 3:17, from the NKJV, we are told, “**For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.**”

You do not need a PhD in Theology to understand this. Well, for that matter you don’t need a degree to understand any part of the Bible, we have the Holy Spirit that will guide us and teach us.

But it is not a difficult passage to understand. Jesus came to save us from our sins that had separated us from God. You see, we were already condemned so Jesus did not come to condemn us but to save us. I think that is very clear!

But Eugene Peterson renders it like this, ***“He came to help, to put the world right again.”***

What Eugene Peterson is saying is that Jesus didn't come to save us, but to help us.

But to help us do what?

To put the world right again which is nothing more than a social gospel that is leading people to Hell even though they may live a little better in this life!

Thus, you distort the truth, and people will not be free, they will continue in bondage to sin and spend an eternity in Hell!

That is why this is so important for us to understand because the truth will set you free, the truth of God's Word applied to our lives, but these lies will not!

So we have looked at – ***DESTRUCTIVE HERESIES!***

As we read on, we will be looking at – ***FOLLOWERS OF DESTRUCTIVE HERESIES!***

## 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!

Let me show you how cults are growing in numbers worldwide.

This is from the end of 2023, and we are told that there were 17,255,394 members of *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS Church) or Mormons* worldwide. This was a 1.49% increase from the previous year.

Not only that but in 2023 the Number of *Jehovah's Witnesses* worldwide is 8,816,562.

And then there is Islam that has approximately 2 billion followers and it is the world's second-largest religion, trailing Christianity's 2.3 billion.

As of 2024, there are between 1.28 and 1.39 billion baptized Catholics worldwide. The Catholic Church is the largest Christian denomination.

Now here's the thing. Most people agree that Jesus was a great teacher. And yet, in saying that, they reject the things that He taught, they don't believe the things that He taught and thus, if He lied, which He didn't, but if He did, that would not make Him a great teacher!

Did you know that according to a 2020 survey amongst Christians, that 30% of evangelical Christians and 52% of American adults believe that Jesus is not God!

Well, let me say this, the Bible says that they are wrong! Listen to what the Bible says and not what others are saying or what you want to believe!

I will just give you one verse on this and there are many, many more! In fact, the whole Gospel of John shows us that Jesus is Almighty God, the second person of the Holy Trinity.

In John 8:24 we are told by Jesus, "**Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am [He], you will die in your sins.**"

As I have said many times before, the "**He**" was added for clarity, but it is not there in the documents. And, in reality, it takes away from what this verse is saying!

This verse should read, "**Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am, you will die in your sins.**"

In other words, if you reject Jesus being Almighty God, the Great *I AM*, then what is going to happen to you?

Jesus said that **“you will die in your sins.”**

In other words, by denying that Jesus is Almighty God you have not received the forgiveness of your sins that is only found in Jesus, Almighty God!

Jesus, in the Incarnation was fully God and fully man!

Not only that but about 44% of respondents agreed that Jesus committed sins like any other mortal being because he was simultaneously a man and God. I guess He had a split personality!

Well, let me say this, the Bible says that they are wrong! Listen to what the Bible says and not what others are saying or what you want to believe!

In John 8:46 Jesus tells us, **“Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me?”**

You see, they could not convict Him of sin because there was no sin in Him!

And if that does not do it then listen to what Peter said in I Peter 1:18-19, **“knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”**

Please understand that Peter is telling us that Jesus was sinless. If He wasn't, then He could not pay the price for our own sin, it had to be a perfect sacrifice!

Not only that but Peter wants us to understand that Jesus did not have any inherited sin from Adam nor did He commit any of His own sins! He was the sinless One!

Here is another interesting belief that people have that are moving them away from God and they are holding onto something that they have made up in their own minds or have been taught by these false teachers.

Did you know that most Americans consider Jesus' birth a historical fact, but less than half believe He existed before his birth!

I know I keep saying this, but it is what it is. So here we go again!

Well, let me say this, the Bible says that they are wrong! Listen to what the Bible says and not what others are saying or what you want to believe!

Again, just one verse in the Old Testament and then I will give you another verse in the New Testament.

First of all, in Micah 5:2 we are told, **“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting.”**

The Amplified Bible puts this verse like this, **“But you, Bethlehem Ephratah, you are little to be among the clans of Judah; [yet] out of you shall One come forth for Me Who is to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth have been from of old, from *ancient days* (*eternity*). [Gen 49:10; Matt 2:5-12; John 7:42.]”**

What I want you to notice is what this verse is saying about Jesus. We are told, **“Whose goings forth have been from of old, From everlasting.”**

That phrase is literally saying that the Messiah existed from beyond the vanishing point.

That no matter how far back in time you go, Jesus existed. The eternal God, Jesus Christ, stepped into our time domain and dwelt amongst us as a man, and being fully God.

It speaks of His eternal existence and thus, He is God.

As we have seen, many like to deny the deity of Jesus. They will say that He is *“a god”* but not *“Almighty God.”*

Let me just make one more point on this and hopefully it is enough. And keep in mind that the Scriptures are filled with verses that show us He is Almighty God, they show us the deity of Jesus!

But let’s just keep this simple. In Matthew 1:23 we are told, **“Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,’ which is translated, ‘God with us.’”**

How clear is that!

Who is with us?

God is with us! Notice, not *“a”* god, but *“God!”*

Thus, our Eternal God, Jesus Christ, became flesh and dwelt amongst us, fully God and fully man in the Incarnation!

Now, back here in II Peter 2:2, notice how all these people are following these false teachers and their **“destructive ways.”**

In other words, in the Greek this word is **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 teachers 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 is 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."**

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 happens with the truth! Peter tells us that those who follow after these destructive heresies **"the way of truth will be blasphemed."**

Why are those who appear to be Christians and yes, even some Christians coming against or putting down what the Bible has to say?

Because, as Paul warned us in II Timothy 4:3-4, **"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables."**

Please understand that!

And here's the thing. The Greek meaning of the word ***"itching"*** is ***"to rub, scratch, or tickle."***

Paul warned the church about the danger of an itching ear, which figuratively refers to people's desires, needs, or wants.

The “*tickled*” ear prefers messages that entertain, please, and comfort over messages that challenge, convict, or stir discomfort.

God’s word is a two-edged sword, it cuts.

God’s word brings discomfort . . .

Itching ears seek teachers and prophets who scratch an individual’s, as one commentator stated, “*worldly pleasures.*”

There is a danger in having itching ears, or ears that embrace sermons and messages that charm rather than preach or convict.

- <https://bit.ly/3ZWjJEG>

Isn’t it interesting when people are convicted, that they put down the teacher or they speak evil of God Himself or His Word!

And specifically, and most importantly, when Jesus says that He is the only way, the Gospel message, we can’t compromise even though people come against it. And yes, when they reject the Gospel, they are speaking evil of God and His Word!

One pastor wrote,

“The Bible is clear that **many** more people follow the broad way that leads to destruction than adhere to the narrow way that leads to life (Matt. 7:13–14; cf. 24:10–12).

In part, credit is due to false teachers for the popularity of the “*wide road,*” as they usher people onto the broad way and encourage them not to look back.

Their message of independence, personal freedom, and self-exaltation is inherently appealing to fallen human hearts, who would rather serve themselves than submit to Christ.

In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus declared, “*Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter*” (Matt. 7:21).

Superficial, insincere claims to be followers of Christ are meaningless; only those who fully submit to His lordship and obey His will demonstrate that they truly belong to Him (cf. John 15:14–16; James 1:22–25; 1 John 2:3–6; 5:1–5).”

And these false teachers with their false doctrine do not love you because, if they did, they would speak the truth, as hard as that may be for us to hear!

So we have seen these – ***DESTRUCTIVE HERESIES!***

We just finished looking at the – ***FOLLOWERS OF DESTRUCTIVE HERESIES!***

And we will finish up looking at – ***THE GAIN OF DESTRUCTIVE HERESIES!***

Now let me ask you this.

What motivates these false teachers?

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.

One writer put it like this in regarding to this word. He wrote, “In keeping with its etymological roots, plastic originally had the connotation of something not completely authentic.

After all, plastic items often look as if they are manufactured from another substance, such as wood, metal, china, and so forth.

Thus plastic at first glance “*deceives*” consumers.

In a similar way, false teachers deal in phony doctrine. Their theology is not really based on biblical truth, but only molded by false reasoning to appear genuine (cf. Col. 2:8, 20–23; 2 Tim. 2:14–18).”

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! They twist the truth, and Satan loves to do that.

There is much truth in what they say, but the error that is placed in with it will be destructive in your faith!

Just study how Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness. How did he do it?

He used the Word of God but twisted the Scriptures to make them say what he wanted them to say!

How did Jesus deal with this?

He said, “**It is written!**”

In other words, with the Word of God, which is truth!

But make no mistake about it, they are in it for their gain, and they will use you to accomplish their fleshly desires.

We see this played out for us in Micah 3:11, which says, **“Her heads judge for a bribe, Her priests teach for pay, And her prophets divine for money. Yet they lean on the Lord, and say, ‘Is not the Lord among us? No harm can come upon us.’”**

They were twisting, perverting the truth, the judicial system was corrupt, and they used it to make a profit. They didn’t care how they obtained their wealth, they only wanted more and more of it.

And why were they acting this way?

For monetary gain!

And they actually believed that God would protect them in their evil practices.

From the judicial system to the religious system, money was the priority, not justice or truth, not pointing people to the Lord.

And look at the boldness, the arrogance of these false teachers, these priests! They are taking advantage of God’s people, and they say, **“No harm can come upon us.”**

Well, they were wrong, and the false teachers today are also wrong, harm will come to them or I should say the judgment of God will come upon them!

And there are several things we can see them employ in their deception.

They fail to speak the truth so that their sins or moral failings are justified.

They claim to teach the Bible but cherry-pick or twist verses so that their personal beliefs are supported.

They leave out important points of Biblical doctrine (like confronting sin) or they ignore God’s Words in order to back up their claims.

They live their lives in direct opposition to what God requires of their position.

They knowingly deal in falsehoods that lead others to abandon the faith.

We see it in the past and it continues on today, this making a profit off of God continues on!

Look at the Roman Catholic Church as one Church historian said,

“In the Middle Ages, the Roman Catholic Church was notorious for its merchandising of the gospel. Its crude efforts to raise vast sums of money by selling indulgences helped spur the Reformation.

The popes shamelessly sold to the highest bidder the office of bishop or cardinal.

Those who bought the bishops’ miters and the cardinals’ hats willingly paid extortionate prices for them because they could use these positions to line their own pockets.

Father Chiniqy tells of priests who extorted money from impoverished widows, refusing to say masses to help their departed loved ones through the purgatorial fires without the required payment.”

And please understand the Protestant church is no better. Look at the health, wealth and prosperity Gospel that is being proclaimed! It is shameful!

What amazes me is 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.

What about the Gospel message being proclaimed?

No, it is all about them as they exploit the people!

You see, 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.

What can we do?

Listen carefully because God has worked in your life, is working in your life and will work in your life, you just need to listen!

Have you ever listened to a Christian pastor or teacher and think, ***“that doesn’t sound right”***?

Maybe you’ve watched a video and heard things that sound good but don’t really line up with the Word of God.

Here’s the thing. When you get these checks in your spirit, it’s the Holy Spirit moving within you, honing your discernment.

Now you need to listen and obey. Don’t be taken in by these charlatans!

Now when we read of this, when we see all that is going on in the church, the deception, we might be thinking, ***“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!

Even though false teachers won't face judgment until they die, make no mistake about it, their punishment was decreed by God from long ago!

You see, when it says that *“their destruction does not slumber or is not idle”* all that means is even though they have not experienced God's judgment yet, it is coming!

As one writer said, *“In saying this”, one author said, “Peter personifies eternal damnation as if it were an executioner, who remains fully awake, ready to administer God's just sentence of condemnation on those who falsify His Word.”*

So we have seen the – ***DESTRUCTIVE HERESIES!***

We looked at the – ***FOLLOWERS OF DESTRUCTIVE HERESIES!***

And we finished up looking at – ***THE GAIN OF DESTRUCTIVE HERESIES!***

As we continue on in this chapter next time, we will see that judgment will come against these false teachers, they will not get away with anything no matter how sincere they are!

Let me close with this. We are told,

“Heresy always does affect morality, if it's heretical enough.” So said G. K. Chesterton.

And we have seen plenty over the last few years to confirm the general state of affairs in Christian thinking . . .

Of the modern mentality, Chesterton added, “The word ‘heresy’ not only means no longer being wrong; it practically means being clear-headed and courageous. The word ‘orthodoxy’ not only no longer means being right; it practically means being wrong.”

“It means,” he concluded, that “people care less for whether they are philosophically right. For obviously a man ought to confess himself crazy before he confesses himself heretical.”

Indeed, many audiences of today’s televangelism are commended by their leaders for having the courage to be at odds with mainstream (including evangelical) Christianity.

Standing alone, these souls are convinced that they have discovered (through their prophet) that secret everybody else has missed for nearly two thousand years.

It is a powerful feeling – but terribly misleading.

- Michael Horton, *The Agony of Deceit*, pp. 11-12

Be careful, be wise, know the Word of God and discern truth from error as John has warned us, “**Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.**” I John 4:1-3.