

2 Peter 2

¹ But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves. ² Many will follow their shameful ways and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. ³ In their greed these teachers will exploit you with stories they have made up. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping.

⁴ For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment; ⁵ if he did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others; ⁶ if he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by burning them to ashes, and made them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; ⁷ and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by the filthy lives of lawless men ⁸ (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard)— ⁹ if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment. ¹⁰ This is especially true of those who follow the corrupt desire of the sinful nature and despise authority. Genesis 6:1-4; Jude 6; Revelation 12:7; Genesis 6-9; Genesis 8-19

Bold and arrogant, these men are not afraid to slander celestial beings; ¹¹ yet even angels, although they are stronger and more powerful, do not bring slanderous accusations against such beings in the presence of the Lord. ¹² But these men blaspheme in matters they do not understand. They are like brute beasts, creatures of instinct, born only to be caught and destroyed, and like beasts they too will perish.

¹³ They will be paid back with harm for the harm they have done. Their idea of pleasure is to carouse in broad daylight. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their pleasures while they feast with you. ¹⁴ With eyes full of adultery, they never stop sinning; they seduce the unstable; they are experts in greed—an accursed brood! ¹⁵ They have left the straight way and wandered off to follow the way of Balaam son of Beor, who loved the wages of wickedness. ¹⁶ But he was rebuked for his wrongdoing by a donkey—a beast without speech—who spoke with a man's voice and restrained the prophet's madness. Numbers 22-24,31; Jude 11; Revelation 2:14

¹⁷ These men are springs without water and mists driven by a storm. Blackest darkness is reserved for them. ¹⁸ For they mouth empty, boastful words and, by appealing to the lustful desires of sinful human nature, they entice people who are just escaping from those who live in error. ¹⁹ They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity—for a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him. ²⁰ If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning. ²¹ It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them. ²² Of them the proverbs are true: "A dog returns to its vomit," and, "A sow that is washed goes back to her wallowing in the mud." Proverbs 26:11

The RISE of false teachers

1. Note their predicted coming

¹ But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you.

2. Note their previous conversion to Christ

¹ They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them — ²⁰ If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and overcome,

3. Note their poisonous content

¹ They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them—

- ▶ *Deception about the consequences of sin*
- ▶ *Defamation of the cross and the Savior*

4. Note their personal charisma

² Many will follow their shameful ways and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. ³ In their greed these teachers will exploit you with stories they have made up.

- ▶ *They are popular figures*
- ▶ *They are pulpit fictionalizers*

5. Note their prideful confidence

¹⁰ Bold and arrogant, these men are not afraid to slander celestial beings; ¹¹ yet even angels, although they are stronger and more powerful, do not bring slanderous accusations against such beings in the presence of the Lord. ¹² But these men blaspheme in matters they do not understand.

6. Note their perverted conduct

¹³ Their idea of pleasure is to carouse in broad daylight. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their pleasures while they feast with you. ¹⁴ With eyes full of adultery, they never stop sinning; they seduce the unstable; they are experts in greed—an accursed brood! ¹⁵ They have left the straight way and wandered off to follow the way of Balaam son of Beor, who loved the wages of wickedness. ¹⁶ But he was rebuked for his wrongdoing by a donkey—a beast without speech—who spoke with a man's voice and restrained the prophet's madness.

- ▶ *They are lewd and lustful*
- ▶ *They are greedy and gluttonous*
- ▶ *They are sly and seductive*

7. Note their pitiful contradiction

¹⁷ These men are springs without water and mists driven by a storm. Blackest darkness is reserved for them. ¹⁸ For they mouth empty, boastful words and, by appealing to the lustful desires of sinful human nature, they entice people who are just escaping from those who live in error. ¹⁹ They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity—for a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him.

- ▶ *They are sermonizing to the saints*
- ▶ *They themselves are slaves to sin and Satan*

8. Note their preferred condition

²⁰ If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning. ²¹ It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them. ²² Of them the proverbs are true: "A dog returns to its vomit," and "A sow that is washed goes back to her wallowing in the mud."

- ▶ *They were rescued from sin*
- ▶ *But they have returned to sin*

The RUIN of false teachers

1. Previous false teachers were judged

⁴ For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment; ⁵ if he did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others; ⁶ if he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by burning them to ashes, and made them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; ⁷ and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by the filthy lives of lawless men ⁸ (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard)— ⁹ if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment. ¹⁰ This is especially true of those who follow the corrupt desire of the sinful nature and despise authority.

- ▶ *Consider the fallen angels*
- ▶ *Consider the flooded ancients*
- ▶ *Consider that fiery avalanche*

2. Present false teachers will be judged

³ Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping. — ¹² They are like brute beasts, creatures of instinct, born only to be caught and destroyed, and like beasts they too will perish. ¹³ They will be paid back with harm for the harm they have done. — ¹⁷ Blackest darkness is reserved for them.

The RESCUE from false teachers

1. God's people were rescued in the past

⁴ God... ⁵ protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others; — he rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by the filthy lives of lawless men ⁸ (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard)—

2. God's people will be rescued if they persevere

⁹ if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment.

What kind of people ought you to be?

Guarded!

2 Peter 3:17

Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position.

1. False teachers have always been and will always be present in the midst of the Church. The Apostle Paul warned the Ephesians in Acts 20:29-30: *After I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from among your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them.* Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 4:1: *The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.* False teachers and their falsehoods are inspired by the devil and are instruments of the devil. Jesus called the devil a *liar and the father of lies* in John 8:44.

2. The false teachers about whom Peter warned are alive and working today. They are selfishly motivated, they live immorally themselves, and they promote a so-called Christianity which does not require obedience to Christ and holy living. Such doctrine is devastating to the Church, because it produces a false sense of spiritual security. We should remember the warning of Jesus in Matthew 7:21-22: *"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'"*

3. Obedience is always the evidence of real faith. The Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 1:5: *Through Jesus Christ our Lord, and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith.* And Paul wrote again in 2 Corinthians 9:13: *Men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ...* Thus, real faith in Christ is evidenced by confession and obedience. This obedience is obedience to the requirements of Jesus and his Apostles contained in the inspired and authoritative New Testament Scriptures.

4. Real spiritual freedom is freedom from sin, not freedom to sin. Sin is a deceiver, a dominator, and a destroyer. Jesus--through his death, resurrection, teachings, and spiritual empowerment--brings truth into the midst of sin's deception, freedom into the midst of sin's domination, and hope at the prospect of sin's destruction. A true Christian teacher warns believers about the nature of sin and declares the power of Jesus to bring freedom from sin. Failure on the part of a teacher to bring true and timely warnings about sin's nature and consequences constitutes a breach of stewardship before God and an abuse against God's people. Intentional omission of plain New Testament teachings might very well place a teacher in the company or category of "false teachers."

5. No Christian teacher can address the whole of New Testament truth every time he or she rises to minister. Over time, though, a true Christian teacher, especially one who serves in a pastoral role, will present a balanced diet of biblical teaching. Such teaching will comply with the charge given by the Apostle Paul in 2 Timothy 4:1-5: *In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage--with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.* James 3:1 declares: *We who teach will be judged more strictly.* Paul declared to the Ephesians upon his departure from them in Acts 20:26-27: *"I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God."*

6. Though God will indeed judge false teachers as Peter declared, believers must guard vigorously against deception.

- ▶ Every believer should be a diligent reader and student of the Word of God, especially the New Testament.
- ▶ Every believer should be devoted to prayer and worship.
- ▶ Every believer should pursue the fullness and freshness of the Holy Spirit.
- ▶ Every believer should be faithful to a local church where Bible truth is proclaimed comprehensively and consistently.
- ▶ Every believer should carefully and diligently cultivate an all-your-heart-soul-mind-and-strength love for the Lord Jesus.
- ▶ Every believer should guard against sin that so easily entangles.

Without these protections in place, many who were once strong have fallen into the deception of the devil and many young and weak believers have been led astray into false religion. We must hear and heed the exhortation from Jesus in Luke 8:18: *"Consider carefully how you listen."* And we must hear and heed the exhortation of 1 Corinthians 10:12: *If you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!*