

"Characteristics of False Teachers"

Part 5

2 Peter 2

Introduction: Tonight in our study of 2 Peter we have come to a look at the heart of the false teachers as described by God through the pen of Peter. The ugly description starts in 2 Peter 2:10 and goes through verse 16. In these verses it is as though God performs an autopsy on the spiritually dead false teachers. But it not only describes the heart of the false teacher but also the heart of every unsaved person to some extent.

"The Depravity of False Teachers"

2 Peter 2:10-16

Notice 2 Peter 2:9-10

These two verses are connected. In verse 9 Peter tells his readers how God is able to deliver the Godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust for a day of judgment. Then in verse 10 he explains who the judgment is reserved for and at the same time he is going to show why these unjust are worthy of God's judgment and wrath. Now when the judgment falls upon the unjust it will come swiftly. What the unjust do not know is that God's wrath is building like flood waters behind an eroding dam.

Romans 2:5-9

⁵ *But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God:*

⁶ *Who will render to every man according to his deeds:*

⁷ *To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life:*

⁸ *But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath.*

⁹ *Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile:*

Notice 2 Peter 2:10 again.

There are three points about the false teachers that we see here:

1. They live for the lusts of the flesh.

Charles Ryrie believes the words "after the flesh" refer to a sexual perversion, since Peter had just written about Sodom and Gomorrah. Whatever it is that these people were involved in we know that it was an attempt to fulfill the lusts of the flesh. Peter tells us that they are walking after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness. "Uncleanness" means "defilement or pollution".

These people knew no bounds. They did whatever the flesh desired. They were very much like the Gentiles described by Paul in Ephesians.

Ephesians 4:17-19

¹⁷ This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,

¹⁸ Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:

*¹⁹ **Who being past feeling** have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.*

This is a very dangerous path to walk for the unsaved. When they are past feeling they have seared the conscience and no matter how deep they dive into sin it is never enough.

2. They have no respect for authority.

They despise government. Some say this is the authority given to the angels, but others believe that this refers to the authority of the Lord. I believe it refers to the Lord's authority that was preached to them. They hated what they had heard, and they wanted nothing to do with God. If there was any conviction from hearing God's Word, they were quick to suppress the conviction. They did not fear the Lord nor His warnings. They would identify with Jesus, but they would not submit to Him as Lord. This leads to the next point.

3. They are arrogant.

They are presumptuous, self-willed, and are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. This means that they are not fearful to speak false truth about angels or even the Lord Himself. They are arrogant toward God. There is a verse in James that shines some light on these individuals.

James 2:19

¹⁹ Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.

The demons tremble when they think of God but the false teachers which Peter is speaking of do not. They are proud and arrogant, and they have no fear of the Lord.

Notice 2 Peter 2:11

The word "THEM" here could refer to the false teachers or it could refer to fallen angels. Either way the point that Peter is making is that these false teachers are so arrogant that they will not hesitate to go where angels fear to tread. They knew no limits when it came to attacking those who disagreed with their teachings. They would have no problem bringing railing accusations against anyone including Satan and the demons.

Notice 2 Peter 2:12

Here Peter tells his readers these false teachers act like animals. The idea here is that just as animals cannot think or reason because they are driven by natural instincts, so are the false teachers. They are so driven by their desire for the forbidden they cannot even reason in their mind of the consequences. They react in the flesh and never think of following reason or revelation.

Notice the words of Matthew Henry:

"Men, under the power of sin, are so far from observing divine revelation that they do not exercise reason, nor act according to the direction thereof. They walk by sight, and not by faith, and judge of things according to their senses; as these represent things pleasant and agreeable, so they must be approved and esteemed. Brute-creatures follow the instinct of their sensitive appetite, and sinful man follows the inclination of his carnal mind; these refuse to employ the understanding and reason God has given them, and so are ignorant of what they might and ought to know."

These people are "made to be taken and destroyed" because of their sin. They were not created to be this way. They were created to have fellowship with God, but they made the choice to walk away from Him and to live for their own sinful desires.

Notice 2 Peter 2:12 again.

These false teachers speak of that which they know nothing about. They claim to be spiritual, and they claim to know the Truth, but they have no relationship with the Lord and therefore they have no knowledge of the spiritual.

1 Corinthians 2:12-14

¹² Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

¹³ Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

¹⁴ But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Application:

These people can often be seen on the TV. They get in front of a congregation and a camera, and they scream at Satan and at the demons. They demand that Satan be bound and cast down and they demand demons to be restricted and bound. I need to remind you that WE have NO ability to bind Satan and to bind the demons. Satan will never be bound until the end of the Tribulation.

Revelation 20:1-3

And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

² *And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,*

³ *And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.*

It is good for us to pray that Satan will be held back and restrained by the Lord for our services, but he will not be bound until Revelation 20. We have no authority to order Satan to do anything. We certainly do not agree with what he does but we must respect his power.

Notice 2 Peter 2:12-13

They will receive the reward/wages of unrighteousness. There is always a price to be paid for those who turn their back upon the Lord.

Jonah 1:1-3

Now the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying,

² Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me.

³ But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so **he paid the fare thereof**, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.

In verse 13 we see that their sin is practiced in the light of day. These false teachers are so arrogant that they do not even attempt to hide their sin. The word "pleasure" is "hedone" which is the very word that "hedonism" comes from.

Hedonism is the doctrine that pleasure, or happiness is the sole or chief good in life, and is manifest as an insatiable pursuit of self-satisfaction that so characterizes our modern society.

Notice the words of an unknown writer on hedonism:

"It's the warped belief that our ultimate purpose for living is to be found in enjoying pleasure and avoiding pain. A hedonist philosophy of feeling pervades our culture. People no longer say, "I think we should do such and such," but "I feel we should do such and such." People live by the slogan, "If it feels good, it must be good." Choices are made to avoid pain or any sort of discomfort, even at others' expense. The pleasure principle pervades. These false teachers are hedonists of the worst sort and take the practice of hedonism to a new low, even to the point of "reveling in the daytime". They will not hesitate to do whatever it takes to have pleasure."

Notice 2 Peter 2:14

These people are truly slaves to sin. They have eyes full of adultery meaning they are constantly lusting after those whom they are watching. They do not see people as being created in the image of God, but they see people as objects of lust.

Matthew 5:27-28

²⁷ Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:

²⁸ But I say unto you, **That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.**

These false teachers are experts at beguiling unstable souls. This is exactly why it is so important for us to be growing in spiritual maturity. They have hearts that have been exercised in covetous practices. Someone who exercises all the time becomes very good at what they do and that is exactly what Peter is saying here.

Notice 2 Peter 2:15a

Here is where it all started for the false teachers. They turned away from the Truth and they opened themselves up to be used by Satan. Notice the words of Heibert:

"The "take home" message for all of us is don't forsake or turn away from truth, for if you do, you will put yourself in a dangerous situation spiritually! You open yourself up to control by that which is not true. A conscious, deliberate disobedience to the truth, which they knew, yes, they knew the truth, but they did not let the truth "know" them, and so it had no transformative effect, led to the inevitable result that they went astray, effectively lost their way."

Peter now will compare them to a false prophet from the Old Testament.

Notice 2 Peter 2:15-16

These false teachers have taken the way of Balaam. If you remember the story of Balaam, you remember that when we first meet him, he seems like a good prophet. He says he will not curse Israel unless God permits. But the truth was he was looking for higher wages. Balak the king of Moab continued to raise the wages for Balaam to get him to curse Israel and God continued to say "NO". When Balak made an offer Balaam could not refuse he made the choice to go with Balak's messengers to see if it were possible to curse Israel because he wanted the wages. Balaam even spoke some great prophecy concerning the Messiah. Finally when he could not curse Israel, he and Balak went their own ways. But Balaam did give advice to get the wages. He advised Balak to send the women to pollute the men.

Conclusion:

Peter gives us a very detailed description of these false teachers because God wants us to see just how dangerous they are to the body of Jesus Christ. Let us do all we can to be sure we are maturing in our faith so that we are not deceived by them.

Romans 16:17-18

¹⁷ Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

¹⁸ For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.