

¹But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. ²And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. ³By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber. ⁴For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; ⁵and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly; ⁶and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly; ⁷and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked ⁸(for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds)—⁹then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment, ¹⁰and especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority. They are presumptuous, self-willed. They are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries, ¹¹whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord. ¹²But these, like natural brute beasts made to be caught and destroyed, speak evil of the things they do not understand, and will utterly perish in their own corruption, ¹³and will receive the wages of unrighteousness, as those who count it pleasure to carouse in the daytime. They are spots and blemishes, carousing in their own deceptions while they feast with you, ¹⁴having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin, enticing unstable souls. They have a heart trained in covetous practices, and are accursed children.

A whole chapter is written talking about false teachers. This is a difficult chapter, but it is important. Distinguishing a fake piece of currency from a true piece of currency is done by learning what the fake looks like. It is hard to distinguish a fake from a real thing.

Counterfeiting fake luxury products is a big deal. I'm talking about purses, shoes, fake Rolex watches, etc. These fakes look like the real thing, but if you open them up you can see them for the fakes that they are. Fake people are the same way. You might be fooled looking at them from the outside, but as you open them up you see the real thing. False teachers are sort of like that. WE should also beware that sincerity isn't the measure of whether a teacher is false, rather the test is whether or not they teach truth.

Peter is writing this passage to warn us that false teachers will always be around. God loves you and me enough to warn us and give us tools of discernment to distinguish the truth from falsehood.

This passage tell us that there are at least six characteristics of a false teacher.

6 Things

They're always around.

They distort the truth.

They deny Jesus Christ

They broaden the way.

They cover their motives.

They dispise authority because authority means accountability.

2:1 In 1 Peter chapter one, Peter referred to the prophets of the OT as men who spoke, not by their own will, but as moved by the Holy Spirit. On Wednesday night we saw that Moses had warned about such prophets.

"When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that [is] the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, [but] the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him," (Deuteronomy 18:22)

Now Peter is warning us to be on our guard because the false teachers will continue. We should always be keenly aware that they **use our vocabulary, but they don't use our dictionary**. They may talk all about Jesus and salvation, but they are talking about a different Jesus and a different kind of salvation. They will secretly bring "destructive heresies", even denying the Lord. What that means is that they deny Who Jesus was and what Jesus said about Himself. This is important because false teachers don't come right out and say things that look counter to Jesus. They are masters of deception. They carry a Bible around and use terminology that sounds orthodox, but they mean something entirely different.

You will find these false teachers everywhere. The most obvious places are:

- 1 At your front door or in front of the post office where Mormons or Jehovah's Witnesses show up to explain to you their "gospel".
- 2 Liberal and Neo-Orthodox Protestantism – even this last week the Methodist church violated its own rules, and elected a gay married man to the office of bishop. This is apostacy.
- 3 Liberal Roman Catholicism – which is filled with Marxism and Liberation Theology preaches a false Jesus.
- 4 **Any movement that promotes something other than God incarnate coming as Jesus to redeem mankind by dying on a cross for the punishment of sin and rising again on the third day is heresy.**

False teachers deny that the Bible is the God-breathed inspired Word of God. They deny sin and the need for shed blood. They deny a true bodily resurrection, eternal punishment, and salvation by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. They deny miracles. You get the idea. When Sandy and I were newlyweds, we visited a large Baptist church in Houston for a Christmas Eve service. The pastor got up and preached a sermon explaining that there aren't really any miracles in the Bible, but it is a great positive text from which we can get directives on how to live our lives. THIS IS HERESY. When we went home and discussed it because neither of us could believe what we had heard. The pastor had nice things to say about Jesus. He referred to His "divinity," His lofty ethics, His superb example, but there was no talk of Jesus as being God incarnate or confessing Him as Savior and Lord.

2:2 Peter predicts that they will attract large followings. They do this by preaching a gospel that is WIDE. Jesus was very clear that the way to heaven is a narrow gate; it is not a wide gate. False teachers do this by scuttling biblical standards of morality, and they often appeal to the appetites of the flesh.

They do this by scuttling the biblical standards of morality and encouraging the indulgence of the flesh. We hear this more and more when people say, it doesn't matter who you are loving as long as it is love. This truth is that it DOES matter whom you love and how you're "loving them".

2:3 Peter tells us that false teachers are greedy. They often want power over others and in gaining power they'll often satisfy their sexual or financial desires. The priesthood and pastorhood is full of pastor teachers that enjoy their influence over others and it is an easy step to gaining money or sexual gratification as part of the power over others. William Darby, the guy who started the homechurch movement in Ireland in the mid 1800's said, "The devil is never more satanic than when he carries a Bible." These men, with Bible in hand, are posers. They are fake. They pretend to be righteous ministers of the gospel, but they're in it for themselves. Peter tells us that they're going to get what they deserve so there's no need to worry about that. It's coming.

2:4-10 In verses 4–10, Peter gives three examples of God's judgment on apostasy: 1) the angels, 2) the wicked before the flood, and 3) the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

We can assume that the angels who sinned are those also mentioned in Jude 6. The whole chapter of Jude 6 in fact reads much like what we're seeing Peter say here. In this text we learn that these fallen angels: (1) did not keep their position. (2) They left their proper dwelling. Although we can't know for sure, these may be the "sons of God" mentioned in Genesis six that came down and had sex with human women. Genesis 6:2: "The sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose." Angels are actually referred to as "sons of God" in Job 1:6; 2:1. The thought in Genesis 6 is that these sons of God left their proper angelic position and had abnormal sexual relations with mankind. Some may argue that angels are sexless, but I'll remind you that those two angels that lot entertained are described as "men" in Genesis nineteen, and they obviously had bodies capable of sexual function as the unrighteous men of the city sought to rape them. God was outraged by the rebellion of angelic beings who sought to move across God-ordained boundaries, and he condemned them to hell for final judgment.

2:5 The second illustration Peter gives of God's intervention and punishment is of those who perished in Noah's flood. Genesis chapter six tells us that the people on the earth had become horrible in every way.

*"⁵ 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.** ⁶ And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. ⁷ So the LORD said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them." ⁸ But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD. This should remind us that where sin abounds grace abounds more. (Romans 5:20)*

God didn't give a pass to the wicked of that day, and He's not going to give a pass to the wicked of this day. Judgment will come. Earlier this week, the people of the State of Montana passed a law prohibiting medical care workers from giving aid to any baby that might be alive at the time it is aborted. By law it is to be left unattended to die. Yes friends, judgment is coming. I cringe for the babies that will be left to die, but I cringe more for the wrath that is to come on those who voted for such a measure. God **did not spare the ancient world**, but brought **the flood** upon it to destroy its ungodly inhabitants, and only Noah and his family found favor in the sight of the Lord.

2:6 The third example of God's unsparing judgment is the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. These two cities, which were somewhere near the Dead Sea were centers of sexual perversion. The people in those places accepted homosexuality as a normal way of life. This sin is described in Romans 1:26, 27:

even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. ²⁷ Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due. (Romans 1:26b-27 NKJV)

God has an order of things. He considers unrestrained degeneracy to be sin. Sodom and Gomorrah were reduced to ashes. Apostasy often has its roots in moral failure. For instance, a man may fall into serious sexual sin, and instead of acknowledging guilt and seeking cleansing through the blood of Jesus, people begin to rationalize their sinful behavior.

2:7 The same God who judges the ungodly rescues the righteous. Peter illustrates this by the experience of Lot. When we read the Old Testament scriptures we might be shocked by the moral failures of Lot. Yet, Peter tells us that Lot was a righteous man overcome (oppressed) by the filthy conduct of the wicked around him. God saw that Lot had genuine faith. He loved righteousness and hated sin, but he was overwhelmed by the unrighteous around him.

2:8 The writers of the Believer's Bible Commentary explain, "To emphasize that Lot really was a righteous man in spite of appearances to the contrary, Peter repeats that his soul was tormented daily by the things he heard and saw in Sodom. The vile immorality of the people caused him deep suffering." Wow, I can relate to that. You and I can suffer much just from seeing the wicked things going on around us. God watches. He takes an account.

2:9-10 The conclusion is that the Lord will deliver the godly and punish the ungodly. It'll all work itself out. In the meantime, we're to watch out for the false teachers that come to us and tell us that evil is good and that good is evil. The way we do this is to be grounded in the Word of God.

Some of the men in this room had a men's Bible study for many years. We had a guy that came faithfully each week. He had been a member and an officer of Union Grove back in the 1990's. He loved to give his understanding each week about whatever scripture we were studying. He had little respect for those of us who had delved into the Word and taken the time to truly understand what God was trying to communicate to His people. His conversation would invariably come back to some sexual experience he had in his younger days. He'd talk a while, and then with a gleam in his eye he would add, "the problem with sin is THAT IT IS FUN!". Finally, one day, Russell Cushman said, "Joe, we're tired of hearing about your pre-Christ life. It has no place in you conversation or in this Bible Study. Joe slammed his Bible shut, got up and left, and he never came back again. That's how we're to handle repetitive sin. We're not to give it quarter. I fully believe Joe was saved, but he continued to let his flesh dominate his life. He never fully submitted himself to the authority of God. He excused away his immoral behavior saying he was saved by grace and that was all that mattered.

Peter ends verses 11-14 telling us that these types of people are debased. They are great posers and fakes. Attention to self is their ambition. They often seek financial gain or sexual pleasure out of their so-called walk with Christ. They are in fact brute beasts, given to their animalistic tendencies.

Paul tells us we are saved by grace through faith, but we are NEVER TO GIVE SIN AN EXCUSE THROUGH THE GRACE THAT WE'VE BEEN GIVEN. Paul says,

"Grace is no license to sin. As creatures, we are made to serve our Creator. In the absence of truth, we will serve somebody or something. It's an essential part of our nature. Our only choice is this: whom will we serve? At one time, we all served sin and grew weak under its deadly power over us. Now, through God's grace, we have become servants of obedience that sets us right with God, each other, and ourselves. We must daily decide whose servant we are and offer Him our hands, our feet, our hearts, our eyes." (Romans Chapter 7 The Voice).¹

Let us pray.

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