

- **\*Read II Peter 2\*** If the Apostle Paul was sending this chapter as its own individual letter, then I would say that it would be very similar to what we see on the screen. The point of the letter would be beyond evident. Peter clearly wants the recipients of this letter to beware of false teachers. This point cannot be missed as we read this chapter together.
- Peter begins this letter with admonitions for these Christians to give every effort to grow in such a way that they would not be unfruitful nor stumble in their service to God. **(1:8-10)** Peter ends this letter with some writings concerning the judgement day and how they ought to be preparing for it. **(3:11,12)** And then nestled in between these admonitions is some words concerning false teachers. Peter's words on this subject actually begin back in **1:12**. Peter reminds them that the Apostles were not followers of fables, but that they were the ones up on the Mountain with Jesus during the transfiguration and God's announcement of His pleasure in Jesus **(Matt. 17:1-5)**. **(1:16-18)** The Apostles were the ones that had been inspired by God to write the things they wrote, and they were not written based upon their desires and wishes, but they wrote only as the Holy Spirit guided them. **(vv.19-21)**
- These things that the Apostles could boast of were things that could not be said of by false teachers. It seems apparent that Peter, as well as John and others, were busy writing and warning of false teachers that the Christians of the first century needed to be on guard against. Here in this **2nd letter of Peter**, the inspired Apostles give the recipients of this letter a crash course on some things they needed to be aware of concerning false teachers, and I'd like for us to consider this chapter of our recent daily Bible reading to consider the same things.

## **6 Things Peter Teaches Us About False Teachers**

### **I. They exist. (v.1)**

- a) Some would like to think that no person would ever teach anything about God or spiritual things that isn't true, but that just flat out isn't the case.
- b) Peter begins by making the point that there were false prophets back in the old days of Israel. Time and time again, Old Testament writers, especially the true prophets, wrote about false prophets who gave effort to turn the people away from God. **(Jeremiah 6:14(saying peace but no peace); 23:14,32 (adultery, falsehoods, strengthening hands of evil doers, bad dreams; Micah 3:11 (taking bribes for money))**
- c) Peter says that they would continue on in Spiritual Israel. They would have false teachers come up among them. **(v.1)**
- d) New Testament writers made note of false teachers that the readers ought to be aware of. Jesus warns of false teachers at least 3 times in Matthew's Gospel. **(Matt. 7:15, 24:11, 24:24)** The Apostle Paul warned of false teachers and a coming apostasy. **(II Thess. 2:1-3; I Tim. 4:1-3; II Tim. 3)**
- e) There is no doubt that the leaders of the early church were concerned with false teachers.

### **II. They are sneaky. (vv.1,2)**

- a) With these warnings about false teachers, it would be expected that Christians would be on high alert and on guard for suspicious activities.
- b) They would not parade about with signs hanging from their necks saying that they are "false teacher so and so." They also wouldn't be dramatic with their teachings. For us, that dramatic teaching might look like someone teaching us to straight up deny God and become atheists. That approach would quickly get them run out of the church and town.
- c) Therefore, the sly and crafty false teacher would be smart and sneaky in their inclusions of false teachings. They would not come right out with the false teachings, but they would progressively include more and more so as not to alert the senses of Disciples.
- d) This might be done through something Dunigan refers to as the "weave" teaching. They might teach "new" ideas for a little while in order to stretch the thinking of the congregation, but when they sense the congregation beginning to sense something strange then they would back off for a while to let things settle down. But soon they begin to stretch the boundaries again until their false teachings are firmly woven into the fabric of the congregation.
- e) Sometimes false teachings and the introductions of such can be hard to spot, but we must be on constant alert for those things contrary to God's Word so that many will not be led into the destruction of the false teachers.

### **III. They can be motivated by greed. (v.3)**

- a) The motivation of such teachers is an important point for Christians to consider. Peter makes the point that their greed leads them to this place of falsehoods.
- b) Consider the evolution of a false teacher. Often, the one who teaches truth is rejected for the truth of God's Word does not line up with the desires of the flesh. Therefore, in order for one to gain notoriety and prominence, they would need to change their message to gain a following. With notoriety and prominence normally comes some kind of physical wealth, and we know the troubles that can be presented by the opportunities to become rich.

- c) The admonition of the Hebrew Writer was well said when he warned Christians to keep themselves free from the love of money because money can lead us to do things that we would never do otherwise. **(Heb. 13:5)**
- d) Peter says that the false teachers may be in the business because there is much more physical wealth to gain in that line of teaching. Paul was never one who was abundantly blessed with riches and he was content with that. However, he could have been rich if he had just been ok with tickling the ears of those listening to him. **(II Tim. 4:3,4)**
- e) There is a great commonality between many false teachers today, and I don't believe it is any coincidence that is the fact that many are abundantly monetarily blessed.

#### **IV. They are full of wickedness. (vv.10-19)**

- a) Greed is not the only corruption of the false teacher. In fact, he has gotten to this point because sin has overtaken him and his life.
- b) Peter describes the false teacher as being one that indulges in the corrupt desires of the flesh. He is one who despises authority. He has abandoned any type of logic, rationale or reasoning. They are proud of their evil deeds and deceptions.
- c) They speak arrogantly as those who have superior knowledge, and they entice theories with their fleshly desires. They are deceptively focused on the flesh and its desires.
- d) They promise freedom to those who are free, yet they themselves are enslaved to their wickedness. **(Rom. 6:16)**
- e) One major take away from all of this...you cannot separate the false teacher from other sins. Teaching falsely of God will inevitably lead to deeper and deeper sin.

#### **V. They can come from among disciples. (vv.15,16,20-22)**

- a) Probably the saddest portion of this text is the fact that these false teachers came from among God's people. Peter starts off this chapter by saying that the false teachers would come up from among the Disciples. **(v.1)**
- b) Furthermore, Peter uses Balaam as an example of the deeds of these people. At one point, Balaam had been faithful in his actions, but his end was an evil one. These false teachers followed the same path. They were once faithful, but they left the way of light to walk in darkness. **(vv.15,16)**
- c) We know these were Christians based upon **v.20** stating that these people had "escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." These people had knowledge that led them to be saved from their sins, yet they had since rejected that and they were in a worse place than they were before. **(v.21)** They had rejected the Grace of God that had once covered their sins. They had crucified the Son of God, again. **(Heb. 6:4-6)**
- d) Peter concludes by quoting the old sayings and relating them to these teachers. They were worse off than the dogs and the pigs.
- e) This is a strong reminder that we must all stand on guard and not give way to false teachings in our own walk in this life. Those who do teach will be held to a strong standard. **(James 3:1)**

#### **VI. They will be judged. (vv.4-9)**

- a) Peter gives assurance to the fact that these people wouldn't be able to get away with their unfaithfulness because God does not allow evil doers to get away without paying for their actions.
- b) God did not allow angels who sinned to escape punishment. He judged the world of Noah for its wickedness. He demolished Sodom & Gomorrah for their sins, and these people would not escape His Wrath. He would hold them to their punishment on the day of judgement.
- c) Not only would they be punished, but those Godly people who suffered under their actions would be kept by the power of God. God would be with them and sustain them if they trusted wholly in Him. **(v.9)**
- d) Often, we look around and see the wicked prospering. We see the false teachers prevailing, but we must be confident that God will hold all accountable for their actions. God is faithful and each will receive what he has sown in this life. Those who sow destruction will indeed reap it. **(2:1; 3:16)**

Peter sent a very strong message to the Christians receiving his letter concerning those who would arise and lead some astray by their false teachings. May we take these warnings to heart and always be on guard and aware of what we are hearing, and be like the Bereans to make sure that those things taught are so. May God help us to stay vigilant and do all that we can to keep His people pure from sins and the teachings of the evil one.