

Tusculum Hills Baptist Church  
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## YET ANOTHER WARNING AGAINST FALSE TEACHERS

II Peter 2

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My points today are in the form of questions:

- Why another warning about false teachers?
- What is the main goal of false teachers?
- What will happen to false teachers?
- Can Godly people get trapped by false teachers?
- What are the characteristics of false teachers?

## WHY ANOTHER WARNING ABOUT FALSE TEACHERS?

**SCRIPTURE:** 2 Peter 2:2

*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.*

**EXPLANATION:** Why are there so many warnings in the New Testament about false prophets and false teachers? It must be important. The Bible says so much about false teachers that the constant reminder sounds like nagging. You might say, “Brother Paul, I get it...I get it. You’ve told us so many times...please stop.” But I won’t stop. I’ll keep warning you over and over. The question remains, then, why are there so many warnings in the New Testament about false teachers?

Here’s the answer: Because there are so many of them. Because they are clever.

Notice the pattern that Peter lays out in verse 1: They secretly introduce destructive heresies by twisting the truth in a convincing way.

There are some interesting words here that jump off the page.

- The first one is “secretly” – In Greek, it’s pronounced par-ice-ag'-o and it means stealthily. Have you ever seen the stealth bomber? It’s a plane that evades radar detection. The development behind the stealth bomber was top secret and some people thought it was crazy. How could you build a plane that avoided detection by radar?
- The next word is “heresy” – In Greek, it’s pronounced very similar to the English word. In that interpretation, it means a self-chosen opinion.
- Please let this sink in. False teachers stealthily weave their own opinions with truth so cleverly that it goes undetected by many. I’ll tell you one way that I’ve noticed this - the random linking together of unrelated scriptures, taking them out of context.

## **WHAT IS THE MAIN GOAL OF FALSE TEACHERS?**

**SCRIPTURE:** 2 Peter 2:2-3a

*Many will follow their depraved conduct and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. <sup>3</sup> In their greed these teachers will exploit you with fabricated stories.*

**EXPLANATION:** Do you see the goal of false teachers? It’s to manipulate the message and then to manipulate you. Exploitation is taking unfair advantage of someone for personal gain. The problem is that those who are exploited don’t see it. They are manipulated to believe they are following God’s will by doing whatever it is the false teacher wants them to do.

## **WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO FALSE TEACHERS?**

**SCRIPTURE:** 2 Peter 2:3b

*Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping.*

**EXPLANATION:** What do you think God is going to do to these teachers of heresy? Do you think he’ll overlook all the damage they caused? Do you think he’ll give them a pass and just wink? NO! Before we read more verses, please note that we are about to hit a massive if/then statement. If/then is a common communication device. Get a pen and circle the five “ifs” and the one “then” in the following passage.

## **SCRIPTURE:** 2 Peter 2:4-9

For **if** God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them in chains of darkness to be held for judgment; <sup>5</sup> **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; <sup>6</sup> **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; <sup>7</sup> and **if** he rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by the depraved conduct of the lawless <sup>8</sup> (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard)— <sup>9</sup> **if** this is so, **then** the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials and to hold the unrighteous for punishment on the day of judgment.

**EXPLANATION:** The first “if” concerns the spirit world and the rebellion of angels before the creation of the world. The next “ifs” deal with judgment with a touch of grace for those who were spared.

- God flooded the world and wiped out the ungodly people, but spared Noah.
- God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, but spared Lot.

With the last “if”, Peter used the present tense, and there is no doubt it is relevant for today. Verse 9 again: ... **if** this is so, **then** the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials and to hold the unrighteous for punishment on the day of judgment.

## **CAN GODLY PEOPLE GET TRAPPED BY FALSE TEACHERS?**

Verse 9 tells us that the Lord knows how to rescue the godly. We can conclude from this reading that there are indeed godly people who get trapped in false teaching for some reason.

**ILLUSTRATION:** What comes to my mind is a woman who’s been at a church for many years. The woman was there through thick and thin. She was faithful to give to and support the church through the years. At some point, her health prevented her from attending regularly, but she continued to support as best she could. Then, in a way that is difficult to even understand, false teaching infiltrated the church and many people followed the false teaching of the false teacher. This dear elderly woman is innocent of all that happened, and this is when I believe verse 9 kicks in. The Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials. But woe to

the false teacher and those who believe and follow the false teaching because God will hold them accountable. They will be punished on the day of judgment.

## **WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF FALSE TEACHERS?**

**SCRIPTURE:** 2 Peter 2:10-11

*This is especially true of those who follow the corrupt desire of the flesh and despise authority. Bold and arrogant, they are not afraid to heap abuse on celestial beings; <sup>11</sup> yet even angels, although they are stronger and more powerful, do not heap abuse on such beings when bringing judgment on them from the Lord.*

**EXPLANATION:** Simply put, false prophets are bold and arrogant. They think they know everything. “Heaping abuse on celestial beings” is an odd phrase, and I don’t think it’s found anywhere else in the Bible.

Following the characteristics of false prophets, Peter gives another condemnation:

**SCRIPTURE:** 2 Peter 2:12-16

*But these people blaspheme in matters they do not understand. They are like unreasoning animals, creatures of instinct, born only to be caught and destroyed, and like animals they too will perish. <sup>13</sup> They will be paid back with harm for the harm they have done.*

More characteristics are found in verse 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. <sup>14</sup> With eyes full of adultery, they never stop sinning; they seduce the unstable; they are experts in greed—an accursed brood!*

They are seductive people - did you hear that? I’ve read several books about cults and the people they attract. One cult here in America sent scouts to faraway places like Australia to find people who had money but were unstable in some way. Earlier I asked why people follow false prophets, and that’s another reason. They are unstable.

The main characteristic of false prophets is they have left the Gospel. <sup>15</sup> *They have left the straight way and wandered off to follow the way of Balaam son of Bezer, who loved the wages of wickedness. <sup>16</sup> But he was rebuked for his wrongdoing by a*

*donkey—an animal without speech—who spoke with a human voice and restrained the prophet’s madness.*

Even though I’ve done my best to explain to you how people get caught up in such a belief system... I can hear it: “I just don’t see how anyone can follow such a leader. How does such a leader get started?” Here is the answer stated another way: By slowly wandering from the truth. No one goes from truth to heresy overnight. It’s a slow manipulation.

**ILLUSTRATION:** I like to compare the slow wandering from the truth to the colors on paint samples at the paint store. You’ve seen the samples, about the size of a bookmark. If you chose a color and look at the different shades you won’t see much difference between two shades that are side by side, but there is a lot of difference between the first shade and the last shade on that sample.

It may not be easy to detect a slight waver from the truth. But once a false teacher convinces everyone of that slight waver, he or she will continue to take the liberty to go further and further away from the truth.

Here’s a warning for all of us. The scripture is very clear that in the last days, there will be many false teachers. We should be on guard. If you have children or grandchildren, you’d better pray for them daily and use whatever influence you have to keep them on what the scripture calls the straight way.

Occasionally I am asked what I think about well-known TV preachers. Since I am not keeping up with them, most of the time I do not have an answer, so here’s my advice: do not be tantalized by fancy words, or as verse 3 says, “fabricated stories.” If you have a sense that something is not right in their teaching, then you’re probably right. God’s Holy Spirit that dwells in us should be sounding the alarm, and we should pay attention.

If Peter hadn’t condemned false teachers enough, he goes on for the rest of the chapter.

**SCRIPTURE:** 2 Peter 2:17-22

*These people are springs without water and mists driven by a storm. Blackest darkness is reserved for them. <sup>18</sup> For they mouth empty, boastful words and, by*

*appealing to the lustful desires of the flesh, they entice people who are just escaping from those who live in error. <sup>19</sup> They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity—for “people are slaves to whatever has mastered them.” <sup>20</sup> If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and are overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning. <sup>21</sup> 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. <sup>22</sup> Of them the proverbs are true: “A dog returns to its vomit,” and, “A sow that is washed returns to her wallowing in the mud.”*

Peter makes it solidly clear where he stands on the issue and even throws insults at the end.

**CONCLUSION:** What in the world did the recipients of Peter’s letter think? My guess is that someone said, “Hey, we have another letter from Peter. Let’s listen while it is read out loud.” Peter’s letter, along with all of the other letters in the New Testament dealt with current, specific things the churches were dealing with – and now here we have one of the bluntest of discourses. I am sure by the time the reader finished reading this chapter, they knew exactly who the false teachers were.

*Proverbs 14:12 There is a way which seems right to a man, but the end thereof is death.*

*Galatians 6:7 Do not be deceived, for whatsoever a man reaps that he sows.*

Let’s take a look at contemporary America. If people are looking for a church, which is becoming a rare thing, they seem to shop around for what meets their needs rather than whether the church is teaching the Bible. If you are looking for a church, please consider my suggestion to look for a Bible-teaching church first. Make that your first priority. Don’t rate the church on its landscaping, parking lot, or restrooms. Rate the church on its preaching and teaching of the truth.

Here’s a word for pastors and Bible teachers. Take your preparation very seriously. About a year ago, I was in a conversation with some people who told me about a pastor who calls himself an “experiential” preacher. All of his sermons were about

what he experienced the previous week, then he'd wrap it up with a few scriptures. They asked me what I thought, and of course, as you might guess, I gave my answer: If he does this every single week, then he's not an experiential preacher, he's a lazy one. In fact, he's too lazy to even be a false teacher.

Listen, preachers and teachers: spend time in your studies. Make sure you are rightly dividing the word of truth. You don't want to misrepresent the scripture in any way. You may teach a Bible lesson to people who are hearing it for the first time, or possibly the only time in their lives.

For our invitation today, I'll share with you a phrase I've used many times with my kids, who are now adults. In fact, I used it recently several times: I would never lead you astray. I've committed my life to sharing the Gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ.

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I use the NIV translation of scripture because of its conversational nature. Feel free to go to Bible Gateway and copy and paste whichever translation you want to use. This transcript has been edited to an outline format that improves readability and therefore may not exactly follow the video edition.

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