

2 Peter 2 - Characteristics of False Teachers: Arrival, Devices, Doom, Depravity, Emptiness & Regression

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2 Peter 2

II. Description of false teachers (1 Peter 2:1-22)

- (1) Their predicted arrival (2:1a)
- (2) Their devices (2:1b-3)
 - (A) False teaching (2:1b)

1 But false prophets also appeared among the **people**, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will **secretly** introduce **destructive** heresies, even **denying the Master who bought them**, bringing **swift destruction** upon themselves.

1 But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.

1 Now there were false prophets among the people, just as there also will be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies and even deny the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction on themselves.

1 But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

- False teachers were rampant among the Jews throughout the OT...

— There were false teachers preaching peace (when there was no peace) just before the Babylonian captivity (Jer 23:16; Ezek 13:3,6-7)

— Peter is saying that just as there were rampant false teachers in Israel throughout the OT, there will be false teachers coming to them. There wasn't an 85% chance of false teachers coming...this is a promise from God that false teachers will be in the church, just like they were among Israel.

- "...people" - refers to the Jewish people in Jewish history (Cf. Jer 5:31; 23:9-18)

— The application: just as there were false prophets in the past, false teachers will arise and affect the Jewish believers to whom Peter is writing

- "...secretly" - this will be a clandestine operation; these false teachers will sneak in unnoticed, appear just like everyone else, and work in a "secret" manner to spread their deceit

— Jude, who confirms that these false teachers had arrived in the church (Jude was written 4-5 years after 2 Peter), and says that they "have crept in unnoticed" (Jude 4)

— Paul taught the same thing in Acts 20:29-31...that false teachers would arrive unnoticed, sneak in among the church population, in secret

- "...destructive" - false teaching is destructive to a spiritual body in the same way that a disease, such as cancer, is destructive to the physical body

— False doctrine is described as "gangrene" in 2 Tim 2:17 (gangrene is the decay of tissue that happens when the blood supply is obstructed)

— 1 Tim 1:19 says that false doctrine can "shipwreck" someone's faith

— Belief in false doctrine will not erase someone's salvation, but it will severely stunt a believer's maturity in Christ, their growth in Christ, it will cause them to believe a lot of things that God has never said about them. False doctrine can really destroy someone's walk with Christ.

- "...denying the Master who bought them" - they will deny the bodily atonement of Jesus Christ, the fact that Jesus received, in his physical body, the wrath of God for sin that should've been directed to us

— This is exactly what the gnostics taught (dualism): the spiritual world is good and the physical world is bad. If you believe this, it injures the Incarnation and first coming of Christ. If the physical world is bad, God could not have come in a physical body.

— From this belief came the idea of docetism, which means to seem or appear. They believed that Jesus did not come in an actual body, He just "appeared" to come in an actual body, but that wasn't reality. This is why John and other NT writers said things like "...every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist..." (1 John 4:2-3).

— Docetism also injures the doctrine of the second coming, which Peter addresses in 3:4

- It's likely that the false teachers that Peter is predicting to come are not saved (not that a saved person cannot spread false doctrine, because they can). If that is true, then their "denial of the Master who bought them" is a strong argument against Limited Atonement. If they aren't saved, Peter is acknowledging that Jesus' substitutionary atonement paid for their sins as well as the sins of believers.

— The Lord's death was for these unbelieving false teachers, even though they denied it

- "...swift destruction" - although these false teachers will arrive and do damage within the church, especially to the immature and infant believers, God promises to destroy them "swiftly"

— This doesn't mean soon in time, but once destruction is meted out, they will be destroyed quickly

— The harshest words Jesus ever spoke was to false teachers (the Pharisees and Sadducees)

The process for a church, a para-church organization, or a seminary to begin to embrace false doctrine (go liberal) is always the same: a faculty member arrives and begins to say things that are slightly off; people ignore it or discount it, then another faculty member arrives, or worse, what the original faculty member was saying sways a current faculty member. Over the course of time, this happens over and over...new faculty members arrive with the same beliefs, and more faculty members become enveloped in the false doctrine. The bottom line cause of this is due to a weak president, who does not see his role as implementing doctrinal oversight. He's more interested in being a fund raiser, and doesn't really have any sway over the faculty. This process usually takes 2-3 generations to full envelope a church, organization or seminary in these false beliefs.

A false teacher is not a person who teaches false doctrine out of ignorance: Apollos taught mistakenly the message and the baptism of John, but he was not a false teacher (Acts 18:24-28). Instead, false teachers are professed believers who know the truth but who deliberately teach lies in the hope of promoting themselves and getting financial gain from their followers (1 Peter 2:3,14). They are able to live in sin to please themselves (1 Peter 2:10,13-14,18-19), use deceptive means (1 Peter 2:1,3), and twist the Word of God to suit their fancies.

(B) Pernicious ways (2:2a)

(C) Evil speaking of the truth (2:2b)

2 **Many** will follow their **indecentbehavior**, and because of them **the way of the truth will be maligned**;

2 Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned;

2 Many people will follow their immoral ways, and because of them the way of truth will be maligned.

2 And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.

- "Many" - these false teachers will snag a number of unknowing and untaught Christians with their teaching

— "If you teach a licentious gospel, you will never lack for disciples" — Stanley Toussaint

- "...indecent behavior" - licentiousness or "license to sin"; also translated sensuality

— Peter is warning his readers that these false teachers will develop a doctrine that says live for the sin nature

- "...the way of the truth will be maligned" - the false teachers will deceive many, and cause the church and the cause of Christ to be maligned by nonbelievers

— The world, which already hates God and Christians, are gleeful when a Christian, especially someone like a high-profile pastor, falls into sin. Their sin gives the enemies of God an opportunity to blaspheme.

— Because these false teachers would become ascendent in the church, the way of truth would be maligned

— Nathan, when confronting David about his sins, told him that because of his sin, he had given the enemies of God an opportunity to blaspheme

(D) Covetousness (2:3a)

(E) Feigned words (2:3b)

(F) Making merchandise of the flock (2:3c)

3 and in *their* **greed** they will exploit you with **false words**; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.

3 and in *their* greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.

3 In their greed they will exploit you with deceptive words. The ancient verdict against them is still in force, and their destruction is not delayed.

3 And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.

- "...greed" - Peter says that one of the quickest ways to identify a false teacher is that they are motivated by greed

— They are in the ministry to fleece the flock, not to feed the flock; their motivate is exploitation of the flock, not the spiritual well-being of their flock (Cf. Ezek 34:2)

— A false teacher doesn't look at the flock as an area of ministry for himself (or herself), but rather how the flock can minister to them. This is completely contrary to the earthly ministry of Christ (Mark 10:45; John 10:11).

— This is similar to Christ's interaction with the Pharisees, who were in the ministry for the money, to get rich (Cf. Matt 23:25)

- "...false words" - *plastos*, "counterfeit words" or "manufactured, fabricated words"; the root from which we get the English word "plastic"

— Peter is saying that these false teachers will preach "plastic" words because their words don't come from God and His Word, but from their own wicked minds

— They take familiar Bible words and manufacture new meanings for them. They use our vocabulary but empty the words of spiritual meaning.

— At the end of Paul's third missionary journey, he called the elders of the Ephesian church to Miletus to address them (Acts 20:28-31). In v30, Paul declares that false teachers would even come out of the audience he was addressing. Later revelation reveals that at least six false teachers arose out of that audience of Ephesian elders (see note on Acts 20:30).

— The false teachers that Paul predicted, who would "speak perverse things to draw away the disciples after them" is the same thing that Peter is warning his readers about: plastic preachers speaking plastic words in order build their own personal popularity and resume, rather than performing the role that God has for a pastor-teacher.

- The last phrase of this verse is a reminder and encouragement that these false teachers will not go unpunished. God's judgment is "not idle" and their coming destruction is still on schedule.

— Jesus often engaged with prostitutes, adulterers, swindlers and fraudsters, and others, but always reserved His harshest words for the false teachers (Pharisees and Sadducees). In Matt 23, Jesus lamblasts these false teachers.

— This is why James 3:1 says that teachers should be careful because they would receive a harsher judgment

(3) Their doom (2:4-9)

In v4-9, Peter gives three historical examples of how God has judged evil (false teachers), to remind us that false teachers in any age will not go unscathed from God's judgment.

This passage is setup in the Greek as an "if/then" syllogism...if the three historical examples of judgment are true, then the conclusion (v9) will be true as well.

Peter provides these three examples as an encouragement to his readers. After hearing all of the doom and gloom about these false teachers who will assault them very soon, they probably felt defeated. Often when we get descriptions of evil, we become defeated and think the world is against us. But Peter points out that God has a pattern to deal with evil, and at the same time He rescues the godly. And Peter tells them that God will do the same thing with them...evil false teachers will arrive, God will eventually judge them, but at the same time He will rescue and preserve them at the same time.

(A) God's pattern of judgment (2:4-6)

(a) Judgment of angel's in Noah's day (2:4)

4 For **if** God did not spare **angels when they sinned**, but **cast them** into **hell** and committed them to pits of darkness, held for judgment;

4 For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment;

4 For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but threw them into the lowest hell and imprisoned them in chains of deepest darkness, holding them for judgment;

4 For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;

- God delivers both *to* and *from* judgment. Peter shows this by giving four examples (v4-8):

- "...if" - begins the "if/then" syllogism of this passage (Cf. v6,7,9)

- "...angels when they sinned" - Peter's first example is the judgment of the angels who reproduced with human women, whose offspring were the *Nephilim* (Gen 6:1-4)

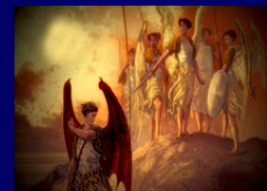
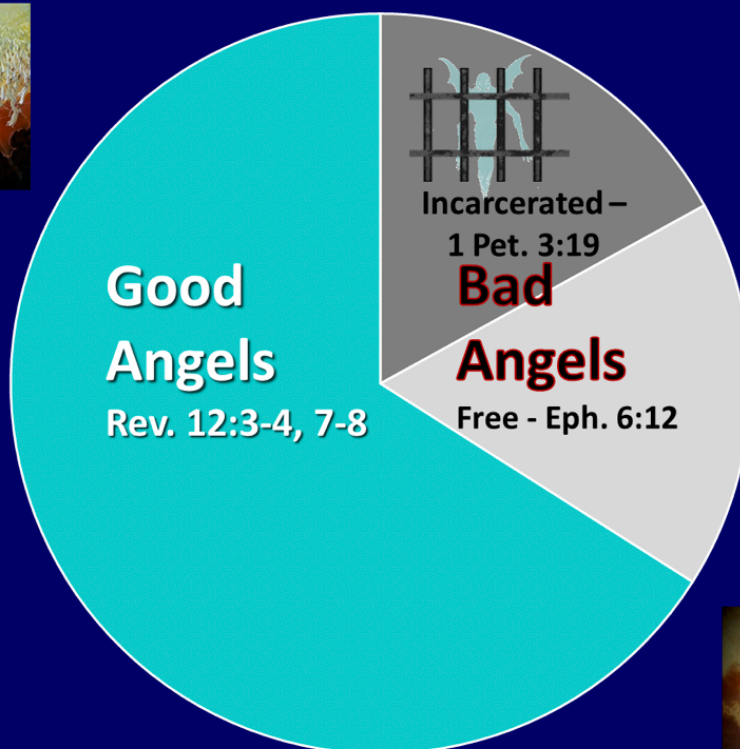
— Notice that Peter identifies them as "angels" directly (Cf. Jude 6) so there's no debate on who he's referring to; he doesn't call them "spirits" or "sons of God"

— The event Peter describes here cannot be the original fall of Satan from heaven (Is 14:12-15; Ezek 28:12-17), where he took one-third of the angels with him (Rev 12:3-8) because that fall did not result in the incarceration of some of the angels

— This event was the aftermath of the sin of some of the fallen angels, who procreated with human women (Gen 6:1-4) in order to corrupt the gene pool and prevent the birth of the Messiah

- Peter and Jude both make reference to this same event (1 Peter 3:19-20; Jude 6-7)
- So the point is: if God has a track record of dealing with evil...He dealt with one-third of the angels who sinned and fell with Satan, and later He dealt with the subset of fallen angels who attempted to corrupt the gene pool. So if God has this historical record of dealing with evil, Peter's readers should not be defeated, but should have faith that because God has dealt with evil in the past, He will do so again in response to these false teachers.
- If God didn't deal with these false teachers in judgment, He'd be acting differently than He has acted historically, and God is the same yesterday, today, and forever
 - "...cast them" - this is an example of how God can deliver to judgment
 - "...hell" - *Tartarus*, a section of Sheol/Hades which is a permanent place of confinement for certain fallen angels
- The fallen angels who intermarried with human women in Gen 6 are now confined in Tartarus; they will never be free to roam again. Eventually, at the Great White Throne Judgment, they will be forever cast into the Lake of Fire.
- Another part of *Sheol/Hades* is the Abyss (*Abousso*), which is a temporary place of confinement for fallen angels or demons
- The *Abousso* is a prison sentence; *Tartarus* is a life sentence
- The permanent confinement of these angels was necessary to assure they would not repeat their sin again after the Flood

GOOD ANGELS & EVIL ANGELS



Because of the egregious sin of this cohort of fallen angels, having left their natural abode, God took that cohort of demons and put them in prison. This is why a study of Satanology in the NT shows that some demons are incarcerated and some demons are free. If you don't adhere to the Angel View of Gen 6, you have no explanation for why some angels are jailed and some are free.

(b) Judgment of Noah's world (2:5)

5 **and** did not spare the ancient world, but **protected** Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly;

5 and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly;

5 and if he did not spare the ancient world but protected Noah, a righteous preacher, along with seven others when he brought the flood on the world of ungodly people;

5 And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;

- "and" - connects v5 with v4

— Connects the sin of these angels with the days of Noah and the Flood

— Those who deny the Angel View of Gen 6 disconnect v4 from v5, and ignore the “and” connective. The question for them is, If v4 has nothing to do with Noah then when were the angels cast into hell? They try to make v4 a description of Satan’s original fall, but that doesn’t agree with Ezek 28:12-17; Is 14:12-15.

— When Satan fell (Rev 12:3-8), he deceived one-third of the angels into following him, but we don’t have any record of anyone being imprisoned during this time. Satan wouldn’t imprison his own (fallen angels), only God would do that, but there’s no record of God doing that at the time of Satan’s original fall.

- “...protected” - God miraculously kept Noah and his family for Himself, genetically pure from the Nephilim intermarriages

— In this case, Noah and his family (eight total) were preserved through the flood, which killed every other human being on the earth

(c) Judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah (2:6)

6 and *if* He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing *them* to ashes, having made *them* an example of what is coming for the ungodly;

6 and *if* He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing *them* to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly *lives* thereafter;

6 and if he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and destroyed them by burning them to ashes, making them an example to ungodly people of what is going to happen to them;

6 And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly;

- The third historical example of God dealing with evil involves Sodom and Gomorrah, and His rescue of “righteous” Lot and his family...

— The visiting angels were under instruction from God to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, but before they could do that, Lot and his family had to leave the city (Gen 19:22)

— Lot’s removal from the city was a prerequisite condition to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah

— This again illustrates how God can deliver *to* judgment

— Sodom and Gomorrah must be important: they are alluded to 7x in both the OT and NT

(B) God spared Lot (2:7-8)

7 and *if* He rescued **righteous Lot**, *who was* oppressed by the perverted conduct of unscrupulous people

7 and *if* He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men

7 and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man who was greatly distressed by the immoral conduct of lawless people—

7 And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked:

- The last example (v7-8) again shows deliverance both *from* judgment (Lot), and *to* judgment (Sodom and Gomorrah)

- "...righteous Lot" - Lot was righteous? He was in the wrong place, thus in a constant state of vexation; he was righteous positionally, but not practically.

— If it weren't for Peter mentioning 3x in v7-8 that Lot was "righteous," there would scarcely be any evidence that he was even saved. If you read the Gen 19 account of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, there is nothing there to indicate that Lot was a "righteous" man.

— Peter is stating that Lot was "positionally" righteous, not experientially righteous. Lot and his family were "saved" but were living carnal lives.

— Lot is the textbook example of a compromising, backslidden believer. Yet even he, in his backslidden condition and carnal state, had to be removed from Sodom before the manifestation of divine wrath fell upon that evil city. Lot ultimately belonged to God, and God's people are not appointed to wrath.

— This is a serious blow to the Partial Rapture theory

— Are you still shocked by sinful things? Or has our consciences been dulled to sin, with apathy toward today's moral standards?

8 (for by what he saw and heard *that* righteous man, while living among them, felt *his* righteous soul tormented day after day by *their* lawless deeds),

8 (for by what he saw and heard *that* righteous man, while living among them, felt *his* righteous soul tormented day after day by *their* lawless deeds),

8 for as long as that righteous man lived among them, day after day he was being tortured in his righteous soul by what he saw and heard in their lawless actions—

8 (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;)

- Lot paid dearly for his lifestyle. He had all kinds of problems, but one problem he didn't have is that he was never a candidate for divine wrath. The angel was prevented by God from fulfilling His instructions until Lot and his family were removed.

— Whatsoever is not of faith is sin (Rom 14:23). Yet he was saved out of it, yet as by fire (1 Cor 3:15).

Lot's Path to Compromise

Gen 13:10 - "...lifted up his eyes": he looked toward Sodom and could see what good territory it was

Gen 13:11 - "...chose for himself" all the plain of Jordan

Gen 13:12 - "...separated himself" from Abraham; he pitched his tent toward Sodom, home of "exceedingly wicked" sinners (13:13)

Gen 13:12 - "...dwelt in the cities of the plain" - he lived near Sodom

Gen 14:12 - "...he was living in Sodom" - he moved from outside the city into the city

Gen 19:1 - "...sat in the gate"; Lot is the "mayor" of Sodom

Gen 19:4-6 - Lot offers his virgin daughters to the sodomites wanting to sodomize the angels

Gen 19:14 - He lost his testimony completely; Lot's family thought he was joking when he tried to get his family to leave the city prior to it being destroyed

Gen 19:30-38 - Lot committed incest with his two daughters while in a drunken steeper (Moabites/Ammonites)

— Lot was called "righteous" [3x] but was vexed daily (2 Peter 2:7-8)

Lot was not just living in Sodom, Sodom was living in him. He was a recognized leader in a city marked by God for total annihilation because of the level of its sin.

Lot lived a life that was as far from a believer as you could imagine, yet positionally he was "righteous" and "godly." But even carnal Lot, with all his lifestyle defects, had to be removed before God's wrath was poured out, because he belonged to the Lord.

If...

...God did not spare the angels when they sinned...(v4)

...[God] did not spare the ancient world but protected Noah...(v5)

...[God] condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah...(v6)

...[God] rescued "righteous" Lot...(v7)

This passage (v4-9) constitutes an extended "if-then" clause. "If" is found in v4-8; "then" is found in v9. Peter's point is that "if" God protected Noah and his family safely in the ark before the floodwaters came upon the earth, and *if* God similarly removed Lot before Sodom was destroyed, "then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment." Thus, here Peter re-articulates what Christ said in Luke 17:26-30. In both historical events (Flood and Sodom), God's people were removed from harm's way before judgment came.

So we learn from this passage that God is very good with bringing judgment; in fact, He also did it with the evil angels who sinned (v4), as well as the worldwide flood and destruction of Sodom & Gomorrah. But with the Flood and the destruction of Sodom & Gomorrah, God removed the righteous from the time and place of judgment, into safekeeping, before pouring out His judgment. With the fallen angels, God quickly judged

the one-third and threw them into the Tartarus, protecting the good angels. So that pattern is, before judgment comes, God takes His people out of the way.

Both Jesus and Peter use both the Flood and the destruction of Sodom & Gomorrah as symbols to describe the last days. What exactly happened before the flood waters came? First, a man named Enoch was walking with the Lord, then the Lord took him (Gen 5:18-24). This happened well before the flood waters came (Gen 7). So there is a symbolic parallel that God removes His own out of harm's way before judgment comes.

(C) Conclusion: God will protect Peter's audience against false teachers (2:9)

9 *then* the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from a trial, and to **keep** the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment,

9 *then* the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment,

9 *then* the Lord knows how to rescue godly people from their trials and to hold unrighteous people for punishment on the day of judgment,

9 The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:

- The conclusion of this passage is that, because God has a track record of delivering the righteous while simultaneously destroying evil, Peter's audience could rest assured that God would rescue them from false teachers while simultaneously judging the false teachers

- "...keep" - *tēreō*, present tense; when God brings judgment on these false teachers, they are "kept" under judgment (punishment, Luke 16:23-24) while they await the final judgment (Great White Throne)

So the lesson that both Jesus and Peter are trying to teach us is that when God sends judgment, He takes His people out of the way first. He did that with Enoch, He did that with Noah, and He even did that with a very backslidden man, Lot. The angel did not tell Lot "I will not do anything" until you leave, he said "I cannot do anything" until you leave. Lot's departure was a prerequisite condition to destruction.

The story of Lot is a death blow to the Partial Rapture theory. This theory suggests that only "spiritual, growing" Christians will be taken in the Rapture, but backslidden, carnal Christians will be left behind and the Tribulation is designed to "straighten them out." This theory produces a lot of unnecessary fear in people. What happens if I'm having a sinful thought at the moment of the Rapture...does that mean I'll be left behind? Another thing is that everyone who teaches this theory believes they are good enough to be taken. None of them think that they will be left behind. It also ignores the typology of Lot, as well as Paul's point throughout the entire book of 1 Corinthians.

The Description of False Teachers

Peter points out eight specific characteristics of false teachers (v10-22):

- (1) Lawlessness (v10)
- (2) Arrogance (v10b-11)
- (3) Without reason (v12)
- (4) Deceivers (v13)
- (5) Immoral (v14)
- (6) Guilty of the Way of Balaam (v15-16)
- (7) Empty of Content (v17-19)
- (8) Subject to Greater Judgment (v20-22)

(4) Their depravity (2:10-16)

(A) Lustful (2:10a)

(B) Lawless (2:10b-11)

10 and especially those who **indulge the flesh** in *its* **corrupt passion**, and despise authority.

Reckless, self-centered, they speak abusively of *angelic* majesties without trembling,

10 and especially those who indulge the flesh in *its* corrupt desires and despise authority.

Daring, self-willed, they do not tremble when they revile angelic majesties,

10 especially those who satisfy their flesh by indulging in its passions and who despise authority.

Being bold and arrogant, they are not afraid to slander glorious beings.

10 But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and

despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.

- "...indulge the flesh" - refers to some type of sexual perversion, likely homosexuality, since Peter had just written about Sodom and Gomorrah

— "flesh" - *sarx*, refers to the sin nature

— Homosexuality is a behavior that is borne out of our sin nature, not an immutable human trait. It's placed on the same level as adultery, fornication, drunkenness, stealing, murder, thus it can be denied and controlled, just like these other sins.

— Peter is saying that these false teachers will come in and promote licentiousness to such a caliber that they will say it's ok to be a homosexual if that's what your proclivity or desire is

— False teachers will either push you into legalism or licentiousness

— Legalism is the rules and regulations used to control the sin nature; to be brought under external control by something other than the Holy Spirit. This is what Jesus continually

addressed with the Pharisees, who were legalists.

— Licentiousness is essentially a "license to sin"...holiness doesn't matter, it's irrelevant. This goes directly against what Paul says in Rom 6:12; 13:14; Gal 5:16.

- "...corrupt passion" - the desires of the flesh (sin nature) are corrupt; this is what Jesus addressed directly in Mark 7:20-23. Many desires that we have emanate from our sin nature.

— Paul calls these "corrupt passions" as "works of the flesh" (Gal 5:19-21); Paul also notes that born again believers have the power to say No to the sin nature (Rom 6:21).

11 whereas angels who are greater in might and power do not bring a demeaning judgment against them before the Lord.

11 whereas angels who are greater in might and power do not bring a reviling judgment against them before the Lord.

11 Yet even angels, although they are greater in strength and power, do not bring a slanderous accusation against them from the Lord.

11 Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord.

- These false teachers will come in and have such a bold distaste for God-ordained authority that, as the saying goes, "they will trample where angels fear to tread"

— They will despise authority, including the spiritual hierarchy that God has setup; they will slander fallen angels, possibly including Satan himself. They will be daring and self-willed in their arrogance.

(C) Ignorant (2:12)

12 But these, like **unreasoning animals**, born as **creatures of instinct** to be captured and killed, using **abusive speech where they have no knowledge**, will in the destruction of **those creatures also be destroyed**,

12 But these, like unreasoning animals, born as creatures of instinct to be captured and killed, reviling where they have no knowledge, will in the destruction of those creatures also be destroyed,

12 These people, like irrational animals, are mere creatures of instinct that are born to be caught and killed. They insult what they don't understand, and like animals they, too, will be destroyed,

12 But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption;

- These false teachers will be animalistic in the fact that they will be driven by lust instead of logic

- Logic and proper thought is one of the great things God has given us as image bearers. Yet the false teachers will not be driven by their rational faculties that God has given them, but rather by their lusts, which will override logic and rational thinking.
- In this verse, Peter gives us three contrasts of the false teachers, then their destruction:
 - "...unreasoning animals" - animals do not have the reasoning or problem solving skills of a human being; animals do not produce Shakespearean masterpieces
- The ignorance of false teachers is like that of animals that were destined for destruction
 - "...creatures of instinct" - no impulse control, only reacting to their instincts
 - "...abusive speech where they have no knowledge" - they revile angelic beings (v10b-11) but they really don't know what they are doing
- They haven't taken the time to understand God's angelic hierarchy, but they will revile these angels anyway, not knowing what they are doing
 - "...in the destruction of those creatures also be destroyed" - like an animal caught in a trap; God says, If you want to act like animals, I'll treat you like animals (Cf. v1,3,4-9)

(D) Immoral (2:13-14)

- 13 suffering wrong as the **wages of doing wrong**. They count it a pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are stains and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions as they feast with you,
- 13 suffering wrong as the wages of doing wrong. They count it a pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are stains and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, as they carouse with you,
- 13 suffering harm as punishment for their wrongdoing. They take pleasure in wild parties in broad daylight. They are stains and blemishes, reveling in their deceitful pleasures while they eat with you.
- 13 And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you;
- "...wages of doing wrong" - sin always has a price tag (Rom 6:23); however, the window of pleasure that sin brings often overrides any rational thought concerning future consequences
- If you're driven by lust rather than logic, the only thing you're focused on is your next "fix"; you're not focused on the long-term consequences

14 having **eyes full of adultery** that **never cease from sin**, **enticing unstable souls**, having **hearts trained in greed**, accursed children;

14 having eyes full of adultery that never cease from sin, enticing unstable souls, having a heart trained in greed, accursed children;

14 With eyes full of adultery, they cannot get enough of sin. They seduce unsteady souls and have had their hearts expertly trained in greed. They are doomed to a curse.

14 Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children:

- "...eyes full of adultery" - Peter does not confront them on committing adultery, but rather having eyes full of adultery

— Considering adultery or ruminating on adultery is paramount to committing adultery in God's eyes (Matt 5:27). In fact, thinking about adultery leads you in the direction of actually committing adultery.

— David's adultery with Bathsheba started because he had "eyes full of adultery" (2 Sam 11:1-3; these false teachers would be the same way: they will see people of the opposite sex, or even the same sex, or God forbid children, not as the image bearers of God that they are, but rather they will dehumanize people and see them as a sexual object, necessary for sexual conquest.

— Job made a "covenant with his eyes" (Job 31:1); Job knew that to remain clean before God, he had to be careful about what he saw with his eyes

- "...never cease from sin" - these false teachers have not taken one step in the progressive sanctification process

- "...enticing" - *deleazo*, to catch with bait, to seduce; a fishing term

— They are guilty of enticing weaker brethren, who then fall into a state of immorality because of the false teachers

- "...unstable souls" - Peter begins this book (2 Peter 1) with a call for spiritual growth to maturity, because he knows that a mature, growing Christian is one who will not be deceived by false doctrine

— If you're not a growing Christian, you are "unstable" and you'll be easily deceived by false doctrine

— Edifying the saints, teaching them doctrine through Scripture so they grow and mature, is one of the three main purposes of the Church (Eph 4:11-16)

— How should the local church do this? 2 Tim 3:16; 4:2.

- "...hearts trained in greed" - the bottom line motivator of false teachers is greed (Cf. v3)

— Greed was the primary motivator for Judas Iscariot (John 12:4-6); he later betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver (Matt 26:14-16)

(E) Covetousness (2:15-16)

15 abandoning the right way, they have gone astray, having followed **the way of Balaam**, the son of Beor, who loved the **reward** of unrighteousness;

15 forsaking the right way, they have gone astray, having followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;

15 They have left the straight path and wandered off to follow the path of Balaam's son Balaam, who loved the reward he got for doing wrong.

15 Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Balaam, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;

- "...the way of Balaam" - Balaam had a gifting from God as a prophet, but he sold it out for personal profit

— Balaam was guilty of greed and covetousness, as are the false teachers

— Balaam loved the hire for wrong-doing, as do the false teachers, who minister only for money's sake

- Three related aspects:

- The Way of Balaam (2 Peter 2:15)
- The Error of Balaam (Jude 11)
- The Doctrine of Balaam (Rev 2:14)

- "...reward" - wages

The Way of Balaam (2 Peter 2:15)

Pretending to be subject to the Lord, they crave the riches of Balak (the world; Cf. Num 22-24). Num 31:16 attributes his influence to the immorality of the Israelites at Baal-Peor (Num 25). This type is used also in Jude 11, where Baal-Peor is implicit (Cf. 1 Cor 10:8; Rev 2:15).

Error of Balaam (Jude 11)

Reasoning from natural morality and seeing the evil in Israel, he supposed a righteous God must curse them. He was blind to the higher morality of the cross, through which God maintains and enforces the authority and awful sanctions of His law, so that He can be just and the Justifier of a believing sinner. The reward of v11 is not necessarily money; it may be popularity, fame, or applause.

Doctrine of Balaam (Rev 2:14)

His teaching of Balak to corrupt the people who could not be cursed (Num 31:15-16; 22:5; 23:8). Baal-Peor is implicit (Cf. 1 Cor 10:8).

16 but he received a rebuke for his own offense, *for* a mute donkey, speaking with a human voice, restrained the insanity of the prophet.

16 but he received a rebuke for his own transgression, *for* a mute donkey, speaking with a voice of a man, restrained the madness of the prophet.

16 But he was rebuked for his offense. A donkey that normally cannot talk spoke with a human voice and restrained the prophet's insanity.

16 But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbade the madness of the prophet.

- Balaam was rebuked by a donkey

— Verse 12 describes the false teachers as "unreasoning animals"; isn't it appropriate that God would correct someone who is acting like an unreasoning animal (Balaam) by an actual animal

(5) Their emptiness (2:17-19)

17 These are **springs without water** and **mists driven by a storm**, for whom the black darkness has been reserved.

17 These are springs without water and mists driven by a storm, for whom the black darkness has been reserved.

17 These men are dried-up springs, mere clouds driven by a storm. Gloomy darkness is reserved for them.

17 These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever.

- When someone is under false teaching, there's always a pull for them to get involved with their false doctrine

— Peter in v17-19 tells us the end results in the spiritual life of a believer who is under false teaching/doctrine: it leaves a person thirsty, dry, empty, hungry

— False teaching is never able to deliver on the abiding, fulfilling spiritual life

— Peter provides two metaphors to describe the results of false teaching on the believer:

- "...springs without water" - a desert mirage; the promise of drink and refreshment, but it never arrives, your thirst is never quenched

— The opposite of what Jesus offered the woman at the well (John 4:13-14)

- "...mists driven by a storm" - the mist is temporarily satisfying, but then you turn around and it's gone; it has no lasting benefit or satisfaction

— False doctrine never fully and perpetually satisfies our soul; it always leaves us wanting/expecting more

— Jude 12 calls these false teachers "clouds without water"; false doctrine makes many promises, but never delivers

- "...for whom the black darkness has been reserved" - an indication that these false teachers are unbelievers

18 For, while speaking out **arrogant words** of **no value** they **entice by fleshly desires**, by indecent behavior, those who barely escape from the ones who live in error,

18 For speaking out arrogant *words* of vanity they entice by fleshly desires, by sensuality, those who barely escape from the ones who live in error,

18 By talking high-sounding nonsense and using sinful cravings of the flesh, they entice people who have just escaped from those who live in error.

18 For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in.

- "...arrogant *words*" - Scripture always emphasizes the "words" of the false teachers
- Jude 15b describes God's judgment on "the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against Him"
- Jesus spoke often of the "words" of the Pharisees (Matt 12:34,36-37)
- "...no value" - their words are empty; they only speak in order to draw away disciples unto themselves, for their own edification, popularity, prestige, and greed (Cf. Acts 20:28-31)
- "...entice by fleshly desires" - the teaching of these false teachers indulged and appealed to the sin nature
- This is exactly what the gnostics did...in teaching their dualism (that the physical world was bad, but the spiritual world was good), they taught that I can't be held accountable for gossip, for example, because my tongue did it, not me. Since my tongue is physical it was bad.
- This teaching removed all moral accountability for sin; their teaching gave people a built-in excuse for their sin
- If you teach a doctrine that gives people permission to sin, you'll never lack a following
- However this teaching directly contradicts Jesus' teaching (Mark 7:20-23)

19 **promising them freedom** while **they themselves are slaves of corruption**; for by what anyone is overcome, by this he is **enslaved**.

19 promising them freedom while they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved.

19 Promising them freedom, they themselves are slaves to depravity, for a person is a slave to whatever conquers him.

19 While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.

- "...promising them freedom" - freedom from "rules" and "regulations"; sin's promise is freedom, enjoyment, excitement, liberation, but there's always a payoff at some point

— The payoff is that you find yourself a slave to that particular sin that you indulged (John 8:34; Cf. Rom 6:6,14,23)

- "...they themselves are slaves of corruption" - their preaching of "freedom" are empty words because they themselves are not free at all, but are enslaved to corruption

— The false teachers who teach this false doctrine are slaves to sin themselves; they themselves or their false teaching does not have the power to liberate anyone from anything

— While Cain was considering the murder of Abel (Gen 4:7), God told him that "sin is lurking at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it"

— Sin is waiting for you and it wants to enslave and overpower you, but God tells Cain that you must overpower it. Cain didn't heed God's advice, killed his brother Abel, then lived as

a slave and vagabond for the rest of his life because of it.

— Paul says in 2 Tim 3:13 that these false teachers will "proceed from bad to worse" in the last days, "deceiving and being deceived"

— These "imposters" are deceiving others because they themselves are deceived; you can't lead someone into spiritual truth if you are living in deception

- "...enslaved" - false teachers are guilty of promising freedom but, by promising liberty, they place believers in bondage that enslaves them to that by which they are overcome

— The promise of modern psychological counseling: liberty. The delivered result: bondage to self.

— Psychology is doomed to frustration: they are trying to infer the internal system design while being restricted to external behavior. There is a part of you that is not physical. The real "you" is "software," not "hardware."

(6) Their return to their former state (2:20-22)

20 For if, after **they** have **escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ**, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, **the last state has become worse for them than the first.**

20 For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first.

20 For if, after escaping the world's corruptions through a full knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus, the Messiah, they are again entangled and conquered by those corruptions, then their last condition is worse than their former one.

20 For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.

- "...they" - the false teachers

- "...escaped the defilements of the world" - temporary moral reformation

- "...by the knowledge of" - a temporary, superficial knowledge

- "...the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" - two important titles of Christ...

— "Savior" - before He can become your Lord, He must be your Savior (speaks of justification)

— "Lord" - once He is your Savior, He wants to be your Lord (sanctification, Cf. 1 Peter 3:15)

- "...the last state has become worse for them than the first" - a familiar proverb (Cf. Matt 12:45)

— The reason this last state is worse than the first is that, at one time, they had escaped the defilements of the world by their association with the church through the knowledge of

the Lord. However now they are entangled in them again.

21 For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment handed on to them.

21 For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment handed on to them.

21 It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than to know it and turn their backs on the holy commandment that was committed to them.

21 For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.

- Peter says that if these false teachers are only going to have a temporary moral reformation, but never permanently change and come to faith in Christ, it would be better for them that they never drew near to Christ at all

— This is because of the principle that greater knowledge brings greater judgment (Luke 12:48)

— The greater the light, the greater the understanding, the greater the opportunity, the more God expects a response. And if the person never responds, the only thing the light produced was a greater accountability on that person's part on the day of judgment.

— Jesus illustrated this point in Matt 11:20-24 where He mentioned three OT cities and three NT cities, and says that if the OT cities had the same light that was given to the NT cities, they would've had a better response than the NT cities (with less light). Jesus says that these NT cities, who did not repent, would receive a harsher judgment than the OT cities, although all the cities would be judged.

— The NT cities had more revelation than the OT cities: they saw the incarnate Son of God, they saw His miracles, they heard His teaching, and they still rejected Him

— Judas Iscariot got very close to Jesus (Jesus washed his feet [John 13:1-5], and treated him as a friend [John 13:26]), then Jesus said in Matt 26:24 that it would've been better had Judas never been born. More light = more accountability.

22 It has happened to them according to the true proverb, "**A DOG RETURNS TO ITS OWN VOMIT,**" and, "**A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire.**"

22 It has happened to them according to the true proverb, "A dog returns to its own vomit," and, "A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire."

22 The proverb is true that describes what has happened to them: "A dog returns to its vomit," and "A pig that is washed goes back to wallow in the mud."

22 But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

- "...A DOG RETURNS TO ITS OWN VOMIT" - quoted from Prov 26:11

- "...A sow, after washing, *returns* to wallowing in the mire" - a pig might get cleaned up for a short period of time, but at some point they will always go back to where they are comfortable...the mud pit

— Both proverbs illustrate that while false teachers might have a temporary moral reformation, they will always go back to their old ways (vomit or mud)

Prov 26:11: Like a dog that returns to its vomit, So is a fool who repeats his foolishness. While there's no question that both epistles of Peter were written to a believing audience, there is a debate about whether or not the false teachers that Peter describes in 2 Peter, especially in 2 Peter 2, were believers or unbelievers. Seeing how Peter describes them, it's hard to imagine these false teachers as being believers.

BELIEVER OR UNBELIEVER?	
BELIEVER	UNBELIEVER
Purchased (1)	Dogs/pigs (22)
Knowledge of Christ (20)	Overcome (20)
Believers can sin (1:8-10)	Other unbelievers (4-6)
Example of Lot (7-8)	Last state worse than the first (20)
Examples of Balaam (15-16)	Darkness reserved (17)