

A Study of 2 Peter 2

*False Teachers  
& Their Fate*



## *The Epistle of 2 Peter 2 Covers:*

### False Teachers & Their Fate:

1. Warning about False Teachers (2 Peter 2:1)
2. Popularity of False Teachers (2 Peter 2:2)
3. Strategy & Destiny of False Teachers  
(2 Peter 2:3)

### God takes care of the Ungodly & Righteous:

4. The ungodly will be judged (2 Peter 2:4-6)
5. The Righteous will be delivered (2 Peter 2:7-9)

For more information, see Blue Letter Study Guide  
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## *The Epistle of 2 Peter 2 Covers:*

### The Ungodly Defined:

1. They are *of the flesh* & proud (2 Peter 2:10-11)
2. Their Spiritual Doom is Sealed (2 Peter 2:12-13a)
3. A List of the Sins of False Teachers  
(2 Peter 2:13b-17)
4. The Allure of False Teachers (2 Peter 2:18-19)
5. The Danger in following after false teachers  
(2 Peter 2:20-22)

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## 2 Peter 2

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.

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

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.

# False Teachers & Their Fate

## Warning about False Teachers:

*But there were also false prophets:* Even as there were holy men of God who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (tying into 2 Peter 1:21 – "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost"), so also there were false prophets and false teachers then and today. Peter stated this as a fact and not as a possibility; and he says they are among you, not only on the outside of the church.

*Who will secretly bring in destructive heresies:* The deceptive nature and the motivation of their teaching is hidden. No false teacher ever announces himself as a false teacher.

*Destructive heresies:* False teachers bring in destructive heresies that destroy by telling lies about Jesus Christ and His work for us and in us. By these heresies people are hurt and destroyed. Heresy isn't harmless.

# False Teachers & Their Fate

## They Deny the Lord who Bought Them:

*Even denying the Lord who bought them:* In this Peter says that at the very least, they *appear* to be saved: They may have a PROFESSION of faith, but they do not have POSSESSION of faith. The Bible has many ways to help us discern false teachers:

## You Will Know Them By Their Fruit (Matt 7:15-23):

Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

# False Teachers & Their Fate

They Deny the Lord who Bought Them:

Their Works Deny Jesus (Titus 1:13-16):

This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; Not giving heed to Jewish **fables**, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth. Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. *They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.*

They claim to know God, but their *actions* prove they were not genuine believers. Christians can never be entirely sure of what is happening in another person's heart (1 Samuel 16:7). However, we can gauge others' actions to see if they're compatible with a redeemed life (1 John 1:6; James 2:26).

As a result, they are "unfit for any good work." These men will stand in contrast with godly leaders (Titus 1:5-9), who are to be above reproach and known for their good works. There are a lot of "teachers" who want to be leaders, but not many who want to be godly.



# False Teachers & Their Fate

They Deny the Lord who Bought Them:

They Deny Jesus Came in the Flesh (1 John 4:1-4):

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

They Do Not Have the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:3):

Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.

*Jesus made it plain, saying that when the Holy Spirit would come, He will testify of Me (John 15:26), and He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you (John 16:14). The ministry of the Holy Spirit is not to promote ourselves or any man, but to glorify and represent Jesus. We can therefore trust that the true ministry of the Holy Spirit will be according to the nature of Jesus.*



# False Teachers & Their Fate

## The Popularity of False Teachers:

***Many will follow their destructive ways:*** This reminds us that false teachers may be popular, but just because something attracts a crowd of followers, doesn't mean that it is of God. We know that God's work will always bear fruit, but the devil's work can also increase:

***2 Timothy 4:3-4** - For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto **fables**. (See Connection to Titus 1:13-16)*

***Because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed:*** When false teachers are at work and when crowds are following them, the way of truth is blasphemed. God's holy name and honor are disgraced.

# False Teachers & Their Fate

## The Strategy & Destiny of False Teachers:

**By covetousness**: False teachers use covetousness – both their own and in their followers. Many false teachers, both today and in previous times, present a gospel that has self-gratification at its core. All this is presented with deceptive words because false teaching never announces itself.

**Their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber**: Peter assured us that false teachers will be judged. Even though it seems they prosper, their judgment is not idle. God's wrath pours out on them even in allowing them to continue, thus heaping up more and more condemnation and hardness of heart in themselves.

"Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, **shall be rooted up**. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, **both shall fall into the ditch**. Then answered Peter and said unto him, Declare unto us this parable. And Jesus said, Are ye also yet without understanding? Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? **But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.**" – Matthew 15:13-19

## 2 Peter 2

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;

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;

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

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

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

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:

# God Knows How to Take Care of the Righteous and the UnGodly

## The Ungodly Will Be Judged:

*If God did not spare the angels who sinned:* God judged these wicked angels, setting them in chains of darkness. Apparently some fallen angels are in bondage while others are unbound and active in the earth as demons.

*Cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness:* By not keeping their proper place, they are now kept in chains of darkness. *Their sinful pursuit of freedom put them in bondage.* Those who insist on freedom to do whatever they want are like these angels: so "free" that they are bound with chains of darkness (a powerful poetic description of their miserable bondage). True freedom comes from obedience to Christ.

*Cast them down to hell:* The ancient Greek word translated hell is literally Tartarus. In Greek mythology, Tartarus was the lowest hell, a place of punishment for rebellious gods. Peter borrowed this word to speak of the place of punishment for the angels who sinned. Angels have a high office and a high service of God; yet it was still possible for them to fall. We should take warning from this.

# God Knows How to Take Care of the Righteous and the UnGodly

## The Ungodly Will Be Judged:

*And did not spare the ancient world:* God judged the ancient world, the world before Noah's Flood, because 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 (Genesis 6:5).

*And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction:* God judged the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, making them an example of His judgment, because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grave (Genesis 18:20).

*Making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly:* These three examples of judgment show us the important principle that Peter wants to highlight: God judged the angels who sinned, so no one is too high to be judged. God judged the ancient world before the flood, so God doesn't grade on a curve, only comparing man among other men. God judged Sodom and Gomorrah, so even the prosperous can be judged. Therefore the ungodly have no reason to think they can escape God's judgment. Their coming judgment is certain. As Jesus said in Luke 10:10-12, for those who reject the truth "it will be more tolerable in that Day for Sodom."

# God Knows How to Take Care of the Righteous and the UnGodly

## The Righteous Will Be Delivered:

*And delivered righteous Lot:* Peter already told us how the Lord delivered Noah, now he shows us how the Lord delivered Lot. God SAVES as well as DESTROYS, His goodness leads him to forcibly save the righteous, as His justice leads Him to destroy the rebellious.

Lot's soul was tormented, but he failed to follow through with godly actions and separate himself and his family from the ungodliness of Sodom and Gomorrah. The Lord delivered Lot because of his righteous soul; yet Lot lost everything else because of his too-close association with those wicked cities.

*Then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations:* Even as the Lord delivered Lot, He knows how to deliver us from the temptations we face, and He knows how to reserve the unjust for the day of judgment. We can trust in God's deliverance of the godly because it is just as certain as His judgment of the ungodly.

## 2 Peter 2

10 But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.

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

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;

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;



# A Description of the Ungodly

## They Are "Of the Flesh" and Proud:

*And especially those who walk according to the flesh:* The ungodly are especially reserved for judgment. They live according to the flesh, not the spirit, and are marked by uncleanness.

*They are presumptuous, self-willed:* The ungodly are proud, they despise authority. In their presumption they will even speak ill of spiritual powers (Satan and his demons) that the angels themselves do not speak evil of, but the angels rebuke them in the name of the Lord instead. Much of what goes on under the name of "spiritual warfare" shows this kind of pride and presumption. While we recognize our authority in Jesus, we see that it is only in Jesus that we have it – and we leave the reviling accusations to Him alone.

*Whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, do not bring a reviling accusation:* Here Peter contrasted the behavior of those who walk according to the flesh with faithful angels. The faithful angels did not slander or exaggerate in what they said or how they represented the sins of others; those who walk according to the flesh do.

# A Description of the Ungodly

## Their Spiritual Doom is Sealed:

**Like natural brute beasts**: Since they function in the flesh, not the spirit, they are like animals. They are fit only for destruction (made to be caught and destroyed) and they are ignorant.

**And will receive the wages of unrighteousness**: The ungodly will be "paid" for their evil – and their fleshly lives will be paid the wages of unrighteousness. **"What these evil men, who were troubling Peter's people, were doing, was to say that they loved and served Christ, while the things they taught and did were a complete denial of him."** - (2 Peter 2 Commentary - William Barclay's Daily Study Bible)

This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. – Galatians 5:16-25

## 2 Peter 2

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:

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

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

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

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 error.

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.

# A Description of the Ungodly

## The Sins of False Teachers:

*Sporting themselves with their own deceivings* : These ungodly false teachers are a dangerous and corrupting presence in the body of Christ, not only deceiving others (as if for "sport") but deceiving themselves also.

*Having eyes full of adultery*: Their heart is set on the flesh, and their eyes on adultery, both spiritual and sexual. They prey on the unstable to join them in their ways (enticing unstable souls).

*They have a heart trained in covetous practices*: They are equipped, but not for ministry, only for selfish gain – they are truly accursed. We all train our hearts in something, either training them in covetousness and lust, or in godliness.

*Following the way of Balaam*: They are like Balaam, who was guilty of the greatest of sins – leading others into sin, and that for the sake of his own gain. Balaam had to be restrained by a dumb donkey because he would not listen to God.

*These are wells without water*: These ungodly false teachers are empty – as useless as wells without water – and like clouds that bring only darkness, and no nourishing rain.

# A Description of the Ungodly

## The Allure of False Teachers:

***They speak great swelling words of emptiness:*** The message of the ungodly false teachers is empty of real spiritual content, though their speech is swollen big with words. Their allure is to the lusts of the flesh in their audience, just as the crowds who wanted bread from Jesus, but didn't want Jesus Himself (John 6:25-27, 6:47-66). In the same way, MANY want Salvation from Jesus, but they don't want Him or love Him. What they don't understand is that ***Jesus IS Salvation***, Salvation is a PERSON, and you either have Him or you don't. You can't have salvation apart from Christ.

***While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves:*** They promise freedom, but freedom can never be found in the flesh, only in God's Spirit. Freedom isn't found in what Jesus can give us, but only in Jesus Himself. When we seek freedom in the wrong way, we become slaves of corruption (decay and death).

***By him also he is brought into bondage:*** In being overcome by the flesh and the false teachers, these unfortunates have become slaves to both.

## 2 Peter 2

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.

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.

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 Description of the Ungodly

## The Danger of Following After False Teachers:

*The latter end is worse for them than the beginning:* It is better for a person to have never known a thing about Jesus than to hear some truth, hold to it for a season, and then later reject it. Greater revelation has a greater accountability.

*It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness:*

- Peter speaks of those who have *escaped the pollutions of the world*.
- He speaks of those who did this through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
- He speaks of those who at one time had known the way of righteousness.

Peter is NOT implying that you can lose your salvation, the theme of 2 Peter 2 is having the "appearance" of salvation – so those who fit the description of Peter here are who heard the truth and rejected it and end up in a place where it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness.

*A dog returns to his own vomit:* The nature of those who follow a false teacher is as a dog who returns to his vomit - he returns to the vomit of the flesh and the world. He is like the brute beasts described in 2 Peter 2:12, more animal than godly because he lives for the flesh, and his false teachers tickle his ears as they lead him down to hell.



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