

2 Peter

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2 Peter 2:1-3

Vs. 1

- Whether in Peter's time or in our own or even in ancient Old Testament times, false prophets have been at work misleading God's people and using God's Word as their own tool for self-indulgence. Peter concluded what we know as Ch. 1 by speaking on the absolute fidelity of the Old Testament. He begins Ch. 2 by pointing out that now as then we need to be on our guard for Pied Piper teachers who will lead us to destruction with a sweet sounding tune.
- What are the marks of a false prophet we should watch for? 1) They are more interested in being popular than being honest. One method of this is how they always know just how to tell people what they want to hear. Jeremiah said that the false prophets in his day would preach "Peace, Peace, when there is no peace" (Jer. 6:14). In Ezekiel 13 we are told that King Jehosaphat wanted to go to war with Syria but wanted to hear from his royal prophets. Zedekiah was very popular at court and dramatically prophesied that the king would win a great victory over Syria and expand his kingdom, which is exactly what the king wanted to hear. So he went to war and lost the war and his life. 2) They are always interested in personal gain. Micah complained that the false prophets in his day "teach for hire and divine for money (Micah 3:11). Paul complained that in the early church there were those who were "empty talkers and deceivers" who teach for the sake of sordid gain" (Titus 1:11). 3) They are often without Godly morals, which was the earmark of Peter's targets. Isaiah complained they "reel and stagger from strong drink" (Is. 28:7). Jeremiah was appalled at how they "commit adultery and walk in lies" (Jer. 23:14). 4) Ultimately

the false prophet's greatest crime is that they lead people away from God (Deut. 13:1-5) and bring shame on the name of God.

- Here the false prophets have Peter immediately concerned by 3 things:
1) they “secretly introduce destructive heresies”. These people were not enemies of Christianity. No, they came saying that they had a new, higher revelation of the faith. “Love one another” took on an entirely different meaning. 2) They were “denying the Master who bought them”. Christ does not compel, does not force Himself on anyone. Christ had paid the price for their salvation, but they only pretended to be disciples, seeking only to see what they could gain from a community who so freely gives all that it has. They were the people Jesus spoke of in the Sermon on the Mount: “Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves...I will declare to them ‘I never knew you, depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness’” (Matt. 7:15, 23). 3) The result of their deception is their swift and sure destruction. Jesus told Peter that those who live by the sword shall be die by the sword (Matt. 26:52). The same idea applies here. Those who lead people to destruction will themselves be destroyed.

Vss. 2-3

- The Greek word for heresy is “**hairesis**” which simply means “a belief or action a person has chosen for themselves”. It wasn’t a bad word. You could say that Henry Ford’s use of the assembly line was his **hairesis**. A single young woman’s **hairesis** might be that she only dates men who are employed. But in terms of faith here, Peter’s enemies are teaching belief’s they have chosen for themselves, not the Truth handed down from Christ to the Apostles.
- Today, when we see the word “sensuality” we primarily think of eroticism and sex, but here the idea is more than that. Eating and drinking to excess, spending on luxuries, and all forms of self-indulgence are here as well. Again, these are certainly Gnostics who held that the body meant nothing, only the spirit mattered, so do whatever you like with your body, for only

your soul will be saved. One thinks of David Koresh and others of his kind who pulled people out into a commune they could control, where they had multiple wives passed around the male leadership of the commune. But here in Peter's time, the threat was not that people would be pulled out but that an entire community may be infected and taken over. One also thinks of how in our own time pastors will come in with an agenda that contradicts Scripture but fits in well with the local moral and political climate and soon it is impossible to tell the church from the lost, unredeemed community surrounding it. Remember, "heresy" is a belief people have chosen for themselves and people love darkness more than light (John 3:19).

- The result of effectively promoting heresy is that "truth will be maligned". Such people lead others to exchange "truth of God for a lie" (Rom. 1:25). Isaiah 24 tells us that "the curse" leads to "chaos" where there is so much noise no one can discern Truth from lies, where "I feel" is more important than "God said".
- The primary motivation of the false prophet is "greed/evil ambition". The word the NASB translates as "greed" is "*pleonexia*" which generally means a desire to possess something you have no right to possess or even desire. It may mean being covetous or lustful toward someone or something or an unholy ambition where it doesn't matter how many you hurt or how much destruction you cause on the way to your goal. Here the false prophet is guilty of nothing less than putting himself in the place of Christ: "My truth is the right truth and you are to honor me as such."
- "false words": Here they are perverting the grace of God as license to sin. "By Christ's death and resurrection and His love and grace we are forgiven for all past and future sins! So don't worry about sin, just eat drink and be merry!" Paul too confronted this in his letter to the Romans 6. In vs. 15 he asked, "Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be!" Paul argues that we are now slaves to Christ and not our lusts and we are to present not only our spirits but our bodies to Christ in obedience to His way.

- The divine sentence passed on one who is guilty of being a false prophet is laid out in Deuteronomy 13 and the sentence is death and destruction. No one who leads another astray will escape their own judgement.
- Psalms 24:3-4 “Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? And who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to falsehood and has not sworn deceitfully.”