

## 2 Peter

Dr. Charles “Buddy” Parrish  
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2 Peter 2:12-22

Vss. 12-14

- Peter continues his diatribe against the false prophets who are threatening to destroy his churches from the inside out.
- He likens his enemies to “unreasonable animals”, brute beasts who are merely creatures of instinct with little real value. Their approach to life is suicidal. They are captured and destroyed by their own lusts. That which they desire most will in turn be their destruction.
- Most people commit their sins under the cover of darkness, but these people are so bold as to openly commit their sins in the daytime in full view of everyone. As a result, they become like blemished lambs, unfit to offer to God. Thus, they are stains on the Christian church for all to see. Their “deceptions”, their immoral versions of the church’s agape love feast are like skin cancers to the church.
- Vs. 14 says they have “eyes full of adultery” which most likely means they look at every woman as a potential sexual conquest. Jesus speaks to the fatal consequences of such in the Sermon of the Mount, Matthew 5:28-29. If the eye is a window to the heart, then it is a corrupted heart that only sees others not as people but as soul-less objects to be used. The Greek word here is *pleonexia* meaning to desire the things which you have no right to desire. And it is a heart trained in greed. The word for “trained” is the same word the Greeks would use for athletic or military training where an athlete or soldier masters not only his body but his fear. So what Peter is saying is that greed, *pleonexia*, lusts, and passions, have become the master of these men’s minds and bodies and spirits to the point that whatever bit of innate decency they may have once had has been crushed.

## Vss. 15-16

- These false prophets have left the straight road and gone down a bad trail.
- In Jewish tradition, Balaam was the poster child for corrupt prophets. His story is in the Book of Numbers, beginning with Ch. 22. The king of Moab was afraid of the Israelites and summoned the prophet Balaam, offering Balaam money if he would put a curse on the Israelites. Like Peter's enemies, Balaam was covetous. While he never actually took the king's money, it was all he could think of. Second, he led the Israelites into sin with the Moabites. He was motivated by greed and lured many to sin, just like those Peter is so angry about. In the end, Numbers 31:8 says that the Israelites slew Balaam with a sword. Such people stand condemned by their own actions.

## Vss. 17-22

- Peter now gets down to the practical qualities of these people. These people are like springs with no water. They entice and offer, but they have nothing of substance to give. They are like mist driven by the wind, giving the appearance of being something solid at a distance, but on closer inspection lacking substance and stability.
- Speaking "arrogant words of vanity" they prey on new believers who have just escaped the world's fatal ways "promising them freedom while they themselves are slaves of corruption." Paul tells us in Galatians 5:13 not to use our freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but rather as an opportunity to serve one another in the love of Christ. But Peter here argues that these people are not slaves to Christ but slaves to their own lusts. This is what makes them and their message so arrogant, because they purported to know and teach a way higher than that of Christ.
- Vs 21. – "For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it to turn away..." This is reminiscent of John 9 where Jesus heals a man born blind and the controversy that follows. In the end, in vs. 41, Jesus tells the Pharisees, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but since you say, 'We see', your sin remains." It is

difficult to hold someone responsible for something they did not know or could not have possibly known, but once they do know and then deny what they know, that's a problem. Time and again Jesus would say to the scribes and Pharisees who knew the Bible by memory, "Have you not read...". Today, rabbis will never read Isaiah 53. Once you know the Truth it is impossible to deny it without compromising your own integrity. So today's rabbis like the scribes and Pharisees of old, turn a blind eye to what doesn't fit their tradition and Peter's enemies do the same to be able to sell the spiritual swampland they were hawking. Like the man in the parable of Luke 11, they are in worse shape now than they were BEFORE they knew the truth.

- These men are like dogs who return to their own vomit or a pig who climbs back into the mud. There is nothing you can really do for someone who doesn't want to be saved.