

## **Peter's Farewell Testament How Can We Avoid Being Led Astray?**

**Intro: In our previous studies we've seen that Peter writes out of concern for the saints that he will soon leave behind. The Lord has made clear to him that he will die soon; and he wants the Lord's people to remain true to the faith that he has had a part in revealing. He wants them to be sure about their faith.**

**He helps them understand how they can know that they will enter the eternal kingdom.**

**He helps them understand how they can know that the gospel is true.**

**But Peter is concerned that God's people will be led astray. And thus after giving these assurances, he warns them of the danger of false teachers who might lead them astray. So having affirmed that the gospel is the truth based on unalterable messianic prophecy and the eye-witness testimony of the apostles, he now warns that just as there were false prophets in the OT who undermined the words of God, so there shall be false teachers in the days to come. Disciples need to prepare for them. Thus Peter answers another important question, "How can we avoid being led astray?"**

**Peter's words are not easily subjected to analysis as if he were working from a structured outline. Instead he, by the Holy Spirit, simply pours out his righteous indignation against those who the Spirit revealed would by their false words undermine the apostolic message and the holy life it was intended to produce. He spares no words to impress upon his hearers the characteristics of the false teacher and the consequences to them and those they influence.**

**Due to the length of the chapter it may be well to discuss it in at least two parts, both of which give us valuable insights to protect us from false teachers.**

*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. And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; 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. 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; 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; 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 thereafter; and if He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men (for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day with their lawless deeds), then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment, and especially*

*those who indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires and despise authority. (2 Peter 2:1-10)*

### **False teachers are coming**

Since this is testamentary literature, we are not surprised that Peter would say something about the future of the disciples he will leave behind. His concern is that false teachers will arise and lead them astray.

*The church's future is analogous to Israel's past.*

*But false prophet also arose among the people..*

This connects Peter's warning with the final paragraph of chapter one. Peter had affirmed that in the past God had given His word through His prophets who spoke by the help of the Holy Spirit. But even then there were "false prophets," that is, those who professed to speak for God, but who contradicted the message of God's true prophets.

Usually the message of the false prophet was that the message of judgment predicted by God's true prophets was not going to happen, that everything would be alright. And that the prophets of God were overreacting at best or even conspirators with Israel's enemies.

So likewise Peter can see the same unfolding possibility for the church's future:

*"There will be false teachers among you..." (pseudodidaskoloi)*

Important features of these false teachers

#### ***They are factious***

*who will secretly introduce destructive heresies,*

Originally the word for "heresy" which in Greek is the origin of our word meant a school of thought without any evil connotation; but these schools of thought are dangerous and destructive in that they bring into the community of the faithful ideas foreign to the teaching of the apostles.

The NASB "secretly introduce" may not accurately convey the idea, since the false teachers might actually be quite open about what they believe.

However experience teaches us that false teachers often seek to avoid detection by trying to influence others while keeping a "low profile."

#### ***They are apostate***

*even denying the Master who bought them,*

These teachers have understood the message of the gospel and believed its teaching about Jesus. They have even been among the Lord's purchased servants. But now they turn away from the gospel.

Could there be a clearer statement that saved people can live so as to be lost? These were "bought" by the blood of Christ; but

now they have denied their Master. It would appear that they do so through altering His message, renouncing His word.

***They are self-condemned***

*bringing swift destruction upon themselves.*

To deliberate depart from the truth is at the same time to invite God's swift and decisive judgment.

***They are popular***

*And many will follow their sensuality,*

Jesus called his way "strait and narrow" It is restrictive and difficult. So not surprisingly there is a way that is attractive to the "many." Peter's point here is that even many of God's people will be vulnerable to false teachers and need to heed the warning.

What makes the false teacher especially attractive is the sensual lure of his teaching. The word Peter uses suggests that the teachers encourage wrong sexual practices (immorality & adultery). Sex sells...even false doctrine.

***They are destructive***

*and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned;*

Ironically these apostate teachers will actually cause the more moral among the unbelieving world to malign the way of truth. How much destruction has been brought to the Lord's way and church through the bad behavior of its teachers?

***They are covetous***

*and in their greed they will exploit you with false words;*

False teachers have covetous motives. They will use their popular doctrines to increase their crowds and presumably their support.

***They are doomed***

*their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.*

However attractive the life of a false teacher and those who follow him may be, the destination of both makes us shudder to think of their fate.

It may be that these false teachers denied that there would be any final judgment; thus there was no penalty for their unlawful conduct.

But Peter is sure that their judgment is neither idle nor asleep.

And that leads to a more extended discussion of this truth:

**Application for us**

**What Peter says remains a sobering warning to all of us as well.**

Those who have known the truth and experienced its blessings can leave the faith; and in their leaving bring destruction upon themselves and those they influence.

It is imperative that we look not only at the teaching of others, but also the lifestyle which often reveals a rebellious spirit toward the restrictions of the way of righteousness.

God's delay of judgment should not be interpreted as an indication that it will not occur. False teachers will at last be punished.

No matter how evil may grow around us it is comforting to know that God will deliver true believers in the day of His judgment.

**Conclusion: Peter is convinced that the Lord will come again and with His coming, the great judgment of all mankind before the throne of His glory.**

**What will that day bring for you and me?**