



## The Second Epistle General of Peter

### *The Warning of Infiltration*

#### *2 Peter 2:1-22*

- I. THE PRESENCE OF FALSE PROPHETS (2 Peter 2:1-3)
  - A. Their Historical Presence (2 Peter 2:1)
    1. The contrast declared—“But”
      - a. Simon Peter just spoke of true prophet prophesying prophecy (2 Peter 1:19-21).
      - b. Obviously, a contrast was to now be presented.
    2. The timing declared—“there WERE”
      - a. The time referenced likely points back to the phrase “old time” in 2 Peter 1:21.
      - b. This would go all the way back and suggest that as long as there have been true prophets, there have been false prophets to oppose them.
    3. The identity declared—“false prophets”
      - a. These were typically people who prophesied of their own mind (Jeremiah 5:31; Jeremiah 14:14; Jeremiah 23:32; Jeremiah 29:9).
      - b. These were typically people who desired to be viewed as one while being the opposite within (Matthew 7:15).
      - c. These were typically people who desired to seduce those who adhered to the truth (Mark 13:22) or to keep others from believing the truth, by perverting the right ways of the Lord (Acts 13:6-10).
    4. The infiltration declared—“among the people”
      - a. A false prophet is only useful if he has an audience. To be more specific, he is most useful if he has an audience of true believers or those seeking truth to believe.
      - b. In the church at Ephesus, Paul warned about wolves who would enter in among them, followed by some of their own rising up from within (Acts 20:29-30). In his first epistle, John warned that “many false prophets are gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1).
      - c. False prophets will again arise in the days of Daniel’s seventieth week seeking an audience among the elect (Matthew 24:11, 24).
  - B. Their Expected Presence (2 Peter 2:1)
    1. The certainty of their presence—“even as there shall be false teachers among you”
      - a. As much as these believers would have preferred to be the exception to the rule and have truth without the threat of opposing error, this would not be the case.



- b. The Ephesians had their false teachers (Acts 20:29-30); the Corinthians had theirs (2 Corinthians 11:13-15); the Galatians had theirs (Galatians 3:1); the Colossians had their (Colossians 2:8, 18); the Thessalonians had theirs (2 Thessalonians 2:2; Timothy was warned concerning his (1 Timothy 4:1-3); Titus was warned about his (Titus 1:10-12); and John warned others of their rampant spread (1 John 2:18-19, 26; 1 John 4:1; Revelation 2:9); and Jude exposed them as those who crept in (see the book of Jude).
  - c. Before we complain about this truth, we should consider that the presence of false teachers/prophets and their heresies is a necessary evil and their errors actually serve to manifest those who are approved of God (1 Corinthians 11:19 with 2 Timothy 2:15).
2. The purpose of their presence—“who privily shall bring in damnable heresies”
- a. The manner of their entry—“who privily”
    - (1) In short, the word *privily* suggests something not done out in the open (Matthew 1:19).
    - (2) In other words, the entrance of these false teachers would be a subtle or not easily detectable entry. This is a common theme throughout the New Testament church epistles.
      - a) Paul warned of false teachers who were able to transform themselves to appear as angels of Christ (2 Corinthians 11:13-14).
      - b) Paul warned the Galatians of false brethren who had come in *privily* (Galatians 2:4).
      - c) Paul warned Timothy of those who would *creep* into houses and lead captive silly women (2 Timothy 3:6-7).
      - d) Jude warned of certain men who had *crept* in unawares (Jude 1:4).
  - b. The trouble they bring—“shall bring in damnable heresies”
    - (1) The trouble—“heresies”
      - a) Historically, the word *heresy* was defined as a doctrine or opinion at variance with established or accepted standards.
      - b) Looking through the lens of scripture:
        - i) Identifying something as heresy does not make it heresy (Acts 24:14).
        - ii) Heresy, whether truly heresy or not, would be a way or a manner which would dictate one’s worship (Acts 24:14).
        - iii) Heresies create divisions that ultimately approve those who reject them (1 Corinthians 11:18-19).
        - iv) Heresy is a work of the flesh equivalent to the sins of idolatry, witchcraft, etc. (Galatians 5:19-21).
        - v) A man that is an heretick is subverted and sinneth, being condemned of himself and is only to be admonished a few times before being outright rejected (Titus 3:10-11).



- (2) The extent—“damnable”
- a) Understanding the biblical implications of the word *damn*
    - i) If heresies were not bad enough, the word *damnable* is an adjective used to describe the nature of the heresies to be introduced by the false teachers seeking to infiltrate the believers in Peter’s audience.
    - ii) While the word *damnable* is only found this one time in scripture, the root word *damn* is found alone as *damned* (Mark 16:16; Romans 14:23; 2 Thessalonians 2:12) or as a compound word—*damnation* (Matthew 23:14, 33; Mark 3:29; Mark 12:40; Luke 20:47; John 5:29; Romans 3:8; Romans 13:2; 1 Corinthians 11:29; 1 Timothy 5:12; 2 Peter 2:3).
    - iii) The root word *damn* can also be seen in other compound words such as *condemn*, *condemning*, *condemned*, *condemneth*, *condemnest*, *condemnation*, and *uncondemned*, albeit with modified spelling.
    - iv) In each case, the basic idea of the word has to do with judgment or punishment. In some cases, the punishment or judgment is earthly and temporary (1 Corinthians 11:29), but for others the judgment is spiritual and eternal (John 5:29).
    - v) The root word’s pairing with the word *able* suggests that the heresies being introduced by these false teachers were so severe that they were able to bring about damning, condemnation, or punishment upon those who gave heed to them.
  - b) What should we conclude?
    - i) There is no doubt that all heresies, that are truly heresies, are bad and harmful to men.
    - ii) However, there are some that bring about greater consequences should they be believed.
    - iii) The doctrines brought in by these false teachers were such doctrines. They were able to damn men who would accept them and establish their worship upon them. For believers, this damnation would involve temporal judgment and loss of eternal rewards. For unbelievers, these heresies would keep them from the truth of salvation and thus condemn them to eternal judgment and the wrath of Almighty God.
3. The accomplishment of their presence
- a. They would deny the Lord that bought them.
  - b. They would bring upon themselves swift destruction.
  - c. Note: The coexistence of these phrases presents quite a conundrum for Bible students. After all, how could one be bought, then deny the Lord, then bring upon himself swift destruction. In order to get a better understanding of these truths, consider the following.



- (1) What does it mean to deny the Lord?
  - a) A look at the history of the word *deny* offers a glimpse into a word that can mean a variety of things ranging from *declaring something to be untrue*, to *withholding*, to *refusing to acknowledge*, to *refusing to grant or give*.
  - b) In all its variations (denied, denieth, deny, and denying), the word appears fifty-one times in forty-seven Bible verses.
  - c) Several, if not all, of the definitions listed above could be assigned to the various uses of the word deny in the Bible.
    - i) Declaring something to be untrue (Genesis 18:15)
    - ii) Withholding/refusing to grant or give (1 Kings 2:16)
    - iii) Refusing to acknowledge (Proverbs 30:9)
  - d) More specifically, even the passages pointing to denying the Lord (Joshua 24:27; Job 31:28; Proverbs 30:9; Matthew 10:33; Matthew 26:34-35, 72, 75; Mark 14:30-31, 72; Luke 12:9; Luke 22:34, 57, 61; John 13:38; Acts 3:13-14; 2 Timothy 2:12; Titus 1:16; 2 Peter 2:1; 1 John 2:22-23; Jude 1:4; Revelation 3:8) can be interpreted in the immediate contexts to offer varying definitions.
  - e) Based upon the context of our passage, denying does not seem to be refusing to acknowledge the Lord's existence (2 Peter 2:20), but a rejection of the knowledge they possessed concerning the Lord.
    - i) They had knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (2 Peter 2:20).
    - ii) They had knowledge of the way of righteousness (2 Peter 2:21).
    - iii) Yet, they turned from the holy commandment that was delivered unto them (2 Peter 2:21).
    - iv) Not only did they personally turn from the commandment, but they spoke evil of way of truth (2 Peter 2:2).
- (2) Who is included in the number of people bought by the Lord?
  - a) Simply put, there are really only three possibilities (all of which are not true possibilities when the whole of scripture is considered) concerning their spiritual condition.
    - i) These people had been saved, but their rebellion would bring them under God's chastening hand.
    - ii) These people had been saved but were now lost.
    - iii) Although these people had possessed knowledge of the Lord, they were never saved.
  - b) In order to help narrow their spiritual condition (or not), it would be wise to consider who the Lord "bought" in His death, burial, and resurrection. After all, these people are said to have denied "the Lord that bought them."
    - i) Simply put, the word *bought* indicates that someone or something has been paid for.



- ii) That begs the question, has the Lord paid only for the sins of the saved, or also for the sins of the lost?
  - (a) Obviously, the Lord *bought* or *redeemed* the saved (Acts 20:28; Romans 3:24; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 1 Corinthians 6:20; 1 Corinthians 7:23; Galatians 3:13; Galatians 4:5; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14; Titus 2:14; Hebrews 9:12; 1 Peter 1:18; Revelation 5:9).
  - (b) The only question remaining is did Christ also pay for the sins of the lost? The answer is yes.
    - (i) Christ came to take away the sin of the world (John 1:29).
    - (ii) In Christ, God was reconciling the world unto Himself (2 Corinthians 5:18-21).
    - (iii) God is the Saviour of all (1 Timothy 4:10).
    - (iv) Christ is the propitiation for the sins of the world (1 John 2:2).
    - (v) The Son was sent to be the Saviour of the world (1 John 4:14).
    - (vi) Obviously, all men are not saved because of this all-inclusive payment for sin. The payment must be personally received. 1 Timothy 4:10 explains this distinction.
  - c) Up to this point, we really cannot say for certain whether these people are saved or lost.
- (3) What other phrases are assigned to these people to offer insight into their spiritual condition?
  - a) They were false teachers (2 Peter 2:1).
  - b) They denied the Lord (2 Peter 2:1).
  - c) They brought upon themselves swift destruction (2 Peter 2:1).
  - d) Their ways were pernicious (2 Peter 2:2).
  - e) They were covetous (2 Peter 2:3).
  - f) Their judgment and damnation would not linger or slumber (2 Peter 2:3).
  - g) They were likened to fallen angels who were cast down to hell (2 Peter 2:4).
  - h) They were likened to the general population of Sodom and Gomorrha (2 Peter 2:6).
  - i) They were compared to those who were unjust (2 Peter 2:9).
  - j) They were selfwilled and walked after the flesh (2 Peter 2:10).
  - k) They were likened to natural brute beasts (2 Peter 2:12).
  - l) They would perish in their own corruption (2 Peter 2:12).
  - m) They would receive the reward of unrighteousness (2 Peter 2:13).
  - n) They had deceived themselves (2 Peter 2:13).
  - o) They were cursed children who could not cease from sin (2 Peter 2:14).



- p) They had forsaken the right way (2 Peter 2:15).
  - q) The mist of darkness was reserved for them (2 Peter 2:17).
  - r) They were servants of corruption because they were in bondage to corruption (2 Peter 2:19).
  - s) They escaped, for a space of time, the world's pollutions through knowledge of the Lord and Saviour only to return to those pollutions and be overcome by them (2 Peter 2:20).
  - t) They had turned from the holy commandment that had been delivered to them (2 Peter 2:21).
  - u) They were likened to dogs returning to their vomit or sows returning to their mire (2 Peter 2:22).
- (4) All things considered, were these people saved or lost?
- a) If scripture is allowed to speak for itself, there are no phrases indicating that these men were EVER saved.
  - b) They obviously had knowledge of Jesus Christ (2 Peter 2:20) and had received a holy commandment concerning Him (2 Peter 2:21; see 1 John 3:23).
  - c) For a space of time, they allowed their knowledge to purify their lives (2 Peter 2:20).
  - d) At some point, they rejected their knowledge (2 Peter 2:1) and returned to their old ways (2 Peter 2:20).
  - e) In this behaviour, they were likened to dogs and sows who, for a time, reformed their behaviour, but returned to the whims of their nature (2 Peter 2:22 with 2 Peter 2:12).
- (5) In closing, these people had knowledge of the truth and attempted to self-reform, but they never believed on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation.
- a) This was not uncommon for the Jewish people (see Hebrews 6:4-9; Hebrews 10:26-39; 1 John 2:19).
  - b) This is further confirmed in every comparison provided:
    - i) Fallen angels (2 Peter 2:4-5)
    - ii) Inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah (2 Peter 2:6)
    - iii) NATURAL brute beasts (2 Peter 2:12)
    - iv) Balaam (2 Peter 2:15)
    - v) Dogs who stayed dogs and a sow who remained a sow (2 Peter 2:22)
    - vi) Note: More will be discussed on each of these as we come to the referenced passage.
  - c) Their condition is illustrated by the man who was rid of the evil spirit in Matthew 12:43-45.
    - i) When the evil spirit returned to the man, he found his house "empty, swept, and garnished."
    - ii) Because of this, he found seven other spirits "more wicked than himself" to enter and dwell in the man.
    - iii) "The last state of that man is worse than the first."
    - iv) The problem occurred because the man experienced reformation without regeneration.



## C. Their Expected Success (2 Peter 2:2-3)

1. The quantity of their success—"many shall follow" (2 Peter 2:2)
  - a. The passage could be teaching that the false teachers were going to reach other lost people who would join their ranks as false teachers.
  - b. The passage could suggest that the false teachers were going to have more than a little success among the saved and that saved people would begin to follow false teachers (see 2 Peter 2:3, 13, 18).
  - c. Both could be and are true, but it sadly seems like the false teachers were going to be successful among the saints.
2. The means of their success (2 Peter 2:2-3)
  - a. They would set forth pernicious ways (2 Peter 2:2). Note: The word *pernicious* speaks to that which is harmful or injurious.
  - b. They would speak evil of the way of truth (2 Peter 2:2).
  - c. They would make merchandise of the saints (2 Peter 2:3).
    - (1) The suggestion—The initial sin belonged to the false teachers, but their aim was to sell their error to the saints, making gain of them.
    - (2) The means—"with feigned words"
3. The motivation of their success—"covetousness" (2 Peter 2:3, 14-15)

## D. Their Expected Judgment (2 Peter 2:3)

1. Their judgment now of a long time **lingereth not**.
2. Their damnation **slumbereth not**.

## II. THE HISTORY OF FALSE PROPHETS (2 Peter 2:4-9)

## A. Consider the Days of Noah (2 Peter 2:4-5)

1. The judgment declared (2 Peter 2:4)
  - a. The context of the sin—"angels...sinned...the old world...saved Noah" (2 Peter 2:4-5; Genesis 6:1-22; Genesis 7:1-24; Genesis 8:1-22)
  - b. The judgment given (see Jude 1:6)
    - (1) The angels were not spared.
    - (2) They were cast down to hell.
    - (3) They were delivered into chains of darkness.
    - (4) They were/are reserved unto judgment.
2. The deliverance declared (2 Peter 2:5)
  - a. The old world was not spared...bringing in the flood upon the ungodly.
  - b. Noah was saved.
    - (1) He was the eighth person (see 1 Peter 3:20).
    - (2) He was a preacher of righteousness.
      - a) Some have interpreted this to mean that Noah was preaching in hopes that others would get on the ark.
      - b) The Genesis account seems to dispute that (Genesis 6:13-18; Genesis 7:1).
      - c) Apparently, Noah's preaching was of pending doom.