

Peter has told us in the previous passage about the inspiration behind the Word of God. Men were carried along by the Holy Spirit as they wrote. (1:21) We learned the word concursus, God inspiring men and overseeing His word coming through their own unique personalities. He was specifically speaking of the certainty of the Second Coming of Jesus to judge the earth. That is a motivating factor in our spiritual growth. We are getting ready to see Jesus our judge and Savior.

Now he moves on to the false teachers who were denying the Second Coming. He begins by reminding the readers that this is nothing new. Throughout the Old Testament there were false prophets. ^{1a} *But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you,* The Torah warned that false prophets would come and even show signs and wonders to get people to turn away from the JHWH to serve other gods. The people were to put these false prophets to death. (Deuteronomy 13:1-5) It sounds very harsh, but remember that they had just seen the 10 plagues in Egypt against their false gods. They had followed the cloud through the Red Sea. Even while God was giving the commandments, there were already those demanding a golden calf god be made to lead them. (Exodus 32:8)

Peter compares those false prophets with false teachers in the early church. He understood that the age of the office of prophet had passed. (Luke 16:16) Though the gift of prophecy remains, the church was now taught by the Word of God through the Apostles' doctrine. Teachers like the Apostle Paul traveled from church to church helping the early church understand what Jesus had taught and done. The Gentile churches had little background in the Old Testament, and this gave false teachers an opportunity to exploit them. (2Corinthians 11:4)

Just like the false prophets of old who led people into the sensual religions of the surrounding nations, these false teachers use aspects of our fallen nature to lure us away from the truth. Most cults and false religions justify some form of immorality. (Jeremiah 5:30-31) I would feel uncomfortable telling you of the supposed history of some of the Hindu gods. You are aware of the promise of 70 virgins promised to the martyrs of Islam. I won't go into what was allowed by Mohammed when they raided caravans. The Greek temples in first century had male and female temple prostitutes. Nearly all false religions take something that was created to be holy and blessed and turn it into an enticement to practice it freely outside of the sanctity of marriage.

False teachers sometimes use other seductions like pride. They teach that they have found some secret wisdom or insight, or they are especially called by God to reveal how everyone else is on the wrong path. They often believe that they are the few that God

Commented [notes1]: 2 Peter 1:21 (ESV)

²¹For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Commented [notes2]: Deuteronomy 13:1-5 (ESV)

¹"If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, ²and the sign or wonder that he tells you comes to pass, and if he says, 'Let us go after other gods,' which you have not known, 'and let us serve them,' ³you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams. For the LORD your God is testing you, to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. ⁴You shall walk after the LORD your God and fear him and keep his commandments and obey his voice, and you shall serve him and hold fast to him. ⁵But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has taught rebellion against the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you out of the house of slavery, to make you leave the way in which the LORD your God commanded you to walk. So you shall purge the evil from your midst.

Commented [notes3]: Exodus 32:8 (ESV)

⁸They have turned aside quickly out of the way that I commanded them. They have made for themselves a golden calf and have worshiped it and sacrificed to it and said, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!"

Commented [notes4]: Luke 16:16 (ESV)

¹⁶"The Law and the Prophets were until John; since then the good news of the kingdom of God is preached, and everyone forces his way into it.

Commented [notes5]: 2 Corinthians 11:4 (ESV)

⁴For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or if you accept a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it readily enough.

Commented [notes6]: Jeremiah 5:30-31 (ESV)

³⁰An appalling and horrible thing has happened in the land: ³¹the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule at their direction; my people love to have it so, but what will you do when the end comes?

has accepted because of some special doctrine they hold. Scientology, Rosicrucian, Gnosticism and numerous others, including many Greek cults of the first century, all had some so called secret wisdom. The lure is pride in possessing something the common person does not have. (Ezekiel 28:1-2)

Some within the church do it as well. They would claim that only those who hold their special unorthodox doctrine are truly saved. Only those who practice the faith the way they do, or perform the ritual the right way, like the Catholic church's belief that only communion from an ordained priest means you have partaken of Christ. In the first century it was the false teaching that the Gentiles had to keep the letter of the law to be saved. (Galatians 2:4)

The thing that makes historical Christianity so appealing is that it is for all. Nothing is hidden. There is no secret. It is free. There is no perversion or seduction. It is for the simple and the educated. It is for the rich and the poor. An uneducated, handicapped slave can be the greatest in the local church because of their humility and relationship with their Savior. (James 1:9-10) Would you really want it any other way? The Apostle writing this letter was an uneducated fisherman who had denied Jesus.

People complain about **Christianity being exclusive, when in fact, it is the most inclusive of all religions.** Jesus gives Himself freely to all who will come to Him. The false teacher always includes something else you must know or do.

These are false teachers *who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction.* They bring in their heresies secretly because if they did it openly they would be called on it. (2Corinthians 11:13) The word translated "heresies" can also mean a sect. Peter may be saying they secretly form a destructive faction within the church. They lure away sheep before the shepherds realize what is happening. (Jude 4) Distortion of truth is always destructive in the end. (Matthew 7:13) That enticement of the flesh always costs more than they will admit. It destroys the family and damages the psyche of the individual and often the body as well. God gives us His boundaries to protect us from the destructiveness of sin. False teachers try to tear down those boundaries to justify their own actions and entice followers through their fleshly desires. (Acts 20:30)

They even deny the Master, Jesus, who purchased them with His own blood. (1Peter 1:18-19) The Greek word for "Master" that is used here (*despotes*) is only used ten times in the New Testament. It refers to a slave owner. Peter may have chosen this word instead of the more common word for Lord (*kurios*) to imply that they are disobedient to the Spirit and know it. It may not be that they outright deny that Jesus is the Savior, for that would be too obvious to spot. Instead, they simply pervert what He asks of them and us. They refuse His authority over their life and teaching. (1John 5:2)

Commented [notes7]: Ezekiel 28:1-2 (ESV)

¹ The word of the LORD came to me:

² "Son of man, say to the prince of Tyre, Thus says the Lord GOD: "Because your heart is proud, and you have said, 'I am a god, I sit in the seat of the gods, in the heart of the seas,' yet you are but a man, and no god, though you make your heart like the heart of a god"

Commented [notes8]: Galatians 2:4 (ESV)

⁴ Yet because of false brothers secretly brought in—who slipped in to spy out our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might bring us into slavery -

Commented [notes9]: James 1:9-10 (ESV)

⁹ Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation,

¹⁰ and the rich in his humiliation, because like a flower of the grass he will pass away.

Commented [notes10]: 2 Corinthians 11:13 (ESV)

¹³ For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ.

Commented [notes11]: Jude 1:4 (ESV)

⁴ For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

Commented [notes12]: Matthew 7:13 (ESV)

¹³ "Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many.

Commented [notes13]: Acts 20:30 (ESV)

³⁰ and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them.

Commented [notes14]: 1 Peter 1:18-19 (ESV)

¹⁸ knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

Commented [notes15]: 1 John 5:2 (ESV)

² By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments.

The swift destruction that they bring upon themselves does not necessarily mean that they will suddenly die or become ill. I've seen false prophets live long lives. In the Day of Judgment, they will be swiftly judged. There will be no defense or excuse. The fruit of their false teaching will quickly condemn them. (Proverbs 6:14-15)

² And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed. Their own sensuality is evidence that they are false teachers. Listen to how the Apostle John warned the church. *⁷ Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. ⁸ Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning.* ¹ John 3:7-8a (ESV) Watch a person's life and you will know how valid their teaching is. (Matthew 7:20) People follow these false teachers because they want to indulge in the sin the false teacher justifies and practices. It can be sexual, greed, gluttony, pride, or any number of things in which they ignore the restraint of the Spirit of God. (Ephesians 4:19)

How many spiritual leaders have fallen because they chose to ignore the restraint of the Holy Spirit and indulged themselves excessively in some sin? The world picks up on this and uses it to discredit the message (the way of truth). From Jim Baker to Ted Haggard and a hundred others, the Way of Truth has been blasphemed. (Isaiah 52:5) You can find a who's who list of fallen evangelical leaders on the internet. The world loves it for one reason. It discredits the message that teaches that they need to repent of their sin and become a new creation in Christ. (Acts 2:38) They point to these high-profile fallen leaders and say, "See, Christianity has no power and no credibility." On the other hand they ignore that the Bible declares they would do that very thing. They ignore the neighbor next door who was once a depraved drug addict and is now a great example of family man who cares about others. They often also ignore that the vast majority of the third world assistance is done in the name of Jesus.

Peter continues with the devices of the false teacher. *³ And in their greed they will exploit you with false words. Their condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.* My sisters and I would have been fairly wealthy, but the Baptist Foundation of Arizona ended up with our grandparents' estate which later, in a scandal, declared bankruptcy. In another case, I personally watched as a false teacher promised to break "the spirit of poverty" in a congregation as he manipulated them to give him donations. The greater the donation the greater the so called prophecy he gave over them. It literally made me sick to my stomach. He walked out of the congregation that morning with his pockets bulging with checks and cash.

The word used here for "false" is the Greek word *plastos*. We get the word plastic from this word. In other words it looks like the real thing but it isn't. Their teaching sounds so good, but something is amiss. It's like the real thing but there is no real substance. (Galatians 1:6)

Commented [notes16]: Proverbs 6:14-15 (NIV)

¹⁴ who plots evil with deceit in his heart-- he always stirs up dissension.

¹⁵ Therefore disaster will overtake him in an instant; he will suddenly be destroyed--without remedy.

Commented [notes17]: Matthew 7:20 (ESV)

²⁰ Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.

Commented [notes18]: Ephesians 4:19 (NIV)

¹⁹ Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.

Commented [notes19]: Isaiah 52:5 (NIV)

⁵ "And now what do I have here?" declares the LORD. "For my people have been taken away for nothing, and those who rule them mock," declares the LORD. "And all day long my name is constantly blasphemed.

Commented [notes20]: Acts 2:38 (NIV)

³⁸ Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Commented [notes21]: Galatians 1:6 (ESV)

⁶ I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel -

When their prophecies fail and the person is poorer than ever, what do you think happens to their love for the church? Hopefully the victim wakes up and realizes church isn't there to make us rich but to develop our relationship with Jesus. But for many it becomes an excuse to claim the church robbed them, and they want nothing to do with it. Then they can sleep in on Sunday and don't have to give their tithe or get involved in others' lives. They don't realize what they are missing.

This is the second time Peter warns that these false teachers are facing certain doom. It may look like they are getting away with it now, but judgment is certain. It is not sleeping but is alert like a drooling lion waiting to devour them. (1Peter 5:8)

How does Peter know that? He gives us three examples, two of which also give an example of preserving the righteous in the midst of judgment. Here is the first example of certain judgment for those who rebel against God. *⁴ For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment;* This may be referring to the angels of Genesis 6 that came into the daughters of men. (Genesis 6:2) If so, it is a case of rebellion against God as to one's place along with sexual sin. The only other passage we have clearly referring to this is Jude 6. *⁶ And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day-* Jude 1:6 (ESV) Celestial beings are judged by the righteous Judge.

⁵ if he did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; In this case, the entire world had fallen into rebellion against God that was so destructive that all they could think of was evil continually. (Genesis 6:5) At the same time the few that did not go along with the rebellion were spared out of this sweeping worldwide judgment.

⁶ if by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes he condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; And the third example is of Sodom and Gomorrah, a city so engulfed in perversion that even when blinded they still tried to satiate their lusts. (Genesis 19:11) Notice the height, depth and breadth that Peter covers. The angels of heaven, the world wide flood, and the lowest point on earth, Sodom and Gomorrah by the Dead Sea. There is no escaping the eyes of the Lord and His righteous judgments. (Hebrews 4:13)

⁷ and if he rescued righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked ⁸ (for as that righteous man lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard); ⁹ then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment; If God could rescue Noah and Lot and their

Commented [notes22]: 1 Peter 5:8 (ESV)

⁸ Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

Commented [notes23]: Genesis 6:2 (ESV)

² the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose.

Commented [notes24]: Genesis 6:5 (ESV)

⁵ The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

Commented [notes25]: Genesis 19:11 (ESV)

¹¹ And they struck with blindness the men who were at the entrance of the house, both small and great, so that they wore themselves out groping for the door.

Commented [notes26]: Hebrews 4:13 (ESV)

¹³ And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

families from impending judgment, He can rescue you and me from the evil of the world we live in and its certain judgment. (Revelation 3:10) He also knows the time and place for the punishment of these false teachers that exploit the weak with their seductive lies.

^{10a} and especially those who indulge in the lust of defiling passion and despise authority. God has a special judgment for those who seduce people away from the truth using the lust of the flesh. Those who despise God's authority and those who represent it, God will certainly judge.

The wrath of God is as much an attribute of God as His love. Pure love for what is good requires an absolute abhorrence of what is evil! A just and holy God must severely deal with evil. (Habakkuk 1:13a) One cannot sincerely love truth and tolerate lies. One cannot demand justice while tolerating rebellion. If wrath against evil were not an attribute of God, then God would be a compromising god whom you could never trust to do what is right. Righteousness demands wrath against unrighteousness.

Grace and mercy are God's mediating attributes that call us to repent and accept the justice that was meted out upon Jesus. (Ephesians 2:8-9) But if we will not accept the forgiveness that was justly earned by the sufferings of Christ in our place, then we will face the justice we deserve. The only difference between a Christian and the unsaved is that we have freely accepted what Christ did for us. That results in a change of our desires and our life, but those changes came after the grace of God forgave us because of Christ. (Ephesians 5:8-9)

Peter has outlined for us the tactics of the false teachers. He has warned us that their tools are sensuality and greed. Their lifestyle proves they are not of God. They are indulgent and disrespect authority. Their judgment awaits them. There is no escape in height, breadth or depth. At the same time, the Lord knows how to rescue us from this present evil world. (Galatians 1:4) If He rescued Noah and Lot, He can certainly rescue you and me. He will rescue us not only from the slavery of sin, but He will also see us safely into His heavenly kingdom if we place our trust in Him. (1Thessalonians 1:10; 2Timothy 4:18)

Questions

- 1 Discuss OT false prophets.
- 2 Why does he compare them to false teachers?
- 3 How do they gain a foothold?
- 4 What are their favorite tools?
- 5 Why are they secretive?
- 6 What might "deny the Master" mean?
- 7 How do they cause people to blaspheme the way of truth?
- 8 How do they exploit believers?
- 9 Go over the three examples of judgment.

Commented [notes27]: Revelation 3:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth.

Commented [notes28]: Habakkuk 1:13 (ESV)

¹³ You who are of purer eyes than to see evil and cannot look at wrong, why do you idly look at traitors and remain silent when the wicked swallows up the man more righteous than he?

Commented [notes29]: Ephesians 2:8-9 (ESV)

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,
⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Commented [notes30]: Ephesians 5:8-9 (ESV)

⁸ for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light
⁹ (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true).

Commented [notes31]: Galatians 1:4 (ESV)

⁴ who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father,

Commented [notes32]: 1 Thessalonians 1:10 (NIV)

¹⁰ and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.

Commented [notes33]: 2 Timothy 4:18 (ESV)

¹⁸ The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

- 10 What should we learn from them?
11 Why is the wrath of God necessary?