

False Teachers and Their Destructive Heresies (*Part 1*)

2 Peter 2:1-3

Thought for the Day. There are many so-called preachers and teachers today who claim to be spokesmen for God, all-the-while leading their listeners to eternal damnation.

2 Peter chapter 2 is especially relevant and important for us because we are being confronted by many false teachers and teachings in the Church today. However, Peter does not identify the false teachers and their specific teachings; rather, he teaches us how to identify false teachers and their teachings. And this makes sense because the danger will vary from place to place and from time to time.

"The main impetus for this letter was the growing number of false teachers in the church. Peter wanted believers to be able to discern these deceivers. Though Peter identifies no specific individual, cult, or teaching, he shows how to determine whether heresy is being taught.

"Second Peter 2 is relevant for us today. . .because some contemporary teachers and self-proclaimed experts also make remarkable claims about themselves and their teachings. This chapter is a textbook lesson on learning how to discern and defeat heresy.

"Peter described false teachers in detail in this chapter so that Christians would always recognize their characteristics and methods. The description of the false teachers is somewhat generic. Peter does not identify any specific false religion, cult, or system of teaching. In a general characterization of false teachers, he informs us that they teach destructive heresies. They deny Christ and twist the Scriptures. They bring true faith into dispute. And they mock the second coming of Christ. But Peter was just as concerned with showing the immoral character of these teachers as he was with exposing their teaching. Thus, he describes *them* in more detail than he describes their *doctrines*. . .Nothing is more wicked than for someone to claim to speak for God to the salvation of souls when in reality he speaks for Satan to the damnation of souls." (*MacArthur, 1 & 2 Peter, pp. 85-86*)

I. **The Reality of False Prophets (2:1a)**

1 But false prophets also arose among the people...

The Bible has a great deal to say about false prophets:

- Jeremiah 5:30-31 – The prophets and priests were misleading the people, leading them away from God, telling the people what they wanted to hear, and the people loved it! (Cp. 2 Timothy 4:3-4)
- Jeremiah 14:13-16 – Again, false prophets tell the people what they want to hear. They do not speak for God—they lie and deceive; God will punish them.
- Jeremiah 23:23-32 (Cp. Jeremiah 28; Ezekiel 13:1-7) – False prophets cannot hide from God. They claim to speak for God but lie and deceive the people. God is against the false prophets.
- Deuteronomy 18:20 – In the Old Testament, false prophets were to be put to death!

...just as there will be false teachers among you...

- "Among you": the origin of false teachers – they will come from within the Church.

- Matthew 16:18 – Jesus promised, “I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”
- But Jesus also warned that false prophets and teachers would come (Matthew 7:15-16; 24:11; Mark 13:22-23)
- The Church was born in Acts 2 and began to spread throughout the Roman empire. And wherever the Church came into being, false teachers followed.
- The Apostle Paul warned of the dangers of false teachers (Acts 20:25-33; 2 Corinthians 11:12-15; 1 Timothy 4:1-2)
 - **The antidote for false teaching is “the whole counsel of God” and “the word of His grace,” the Word of God.**
- The Apostle John also warned about false teachers (1 John 2:18-24; 2 John 7-10)
- “Just as false prophets had contradicted the true prophets in O.T. times..., telling people only what they wanted to hear, so false teachers were twisting Christ’s teachings and the words of his apostles. These teachers were belittling the significance of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection. Some claimed that Jesus couldn’t be God; others claimed that he couldn’t have been a real man. These teachers allowed and even encouraged all kinds of wrong and immoral acts, especially sexual sin.” (*Life Application Study Bible, p. 2694*)
- Beware: False teacher propagate their lies today through T.V. programs, books, DVDs, and over the Internet on their websites, on YouTube and social media.
- False teachers do not speak the Word of God; they deliver messages that originate in their own hearts and minds.
- They are not motivated by love for God; they are motivated by self-interest, a desire for popularity, financial gain, and sensual desires.
- Discern false teacher: 1) What do they teach about Jesus? 2) Do they preach the Gospel – salvation through faith in Christ alone? 3) Do they exhibit character qualities that glorify the Lord?

Acts 17:11

Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.