

2 Peter Part 6 – Study Notes

Introduction

When God supervised His Word being written He didn't do so in a way to flatter people or to be politically correct so as not to offend people. He wrote to be biblically correct and to show people for what they really are, warts and all. The Bible is full of accounts of people with flawed characters. God doesn't overlook mankind's bad behaviour but exposes it.

For example when God talks about the condition of the heart in Jeremiah 17:9 *The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?* It would probably be safe to say this isn't one of the verses you and I would put in a frame and put up on the walls of our house. But it is just as true as the words written in John 3:16 *For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

As we return to the letter from Peter, Peter referred quite bluntly about the human corruption of false teachers who had strategically infiltrated the Church. He reminded believers of the source of sound teaching, to encourage faith, to strengthen biblical foundations, beliefs and practices.

2 Peter 2:12-14 *But these people blaspheme in matters they do not understand. They are like unreasoning animals, creatures of instinct, born only to be caught and destroyed, and like animals they too will perish. ¹³ They will be paid back with harm for the harm they have done. Their idea of pleasure is to carouse in broad daylight. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their pleasures while they feast with you. ¹⁴ With eyes full of adultery, they never stop sinning; they seduce the unstable; they are experts in greed- an accursed brood!* In these first three verses Peter talked about animal appetites that take full control of human beings. False teachers purposefully spy out the weak to seduce them.

Jesus also taught about false teachers in Matthew 7:15 *Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.*

Peter said their animal behaviour would lead these false teachers to their destruction. They allow an animalistic mentality to control them and look for every opportunity to sin without considering the consequences.

2 Peter 2:15-17 *They have left the straight way and wandered off to follow the way of Balaam son of Bezer, who loved the wages of wickedness. ¹⁶ But he was rebuked for his wrongdoing by a donkey - an animal without speech - who spoke with a human voice and restrained the prophet's madness. ¹⁷ These people are springs without water and mists driven by a storm. Blackest darkness is reserved for them.* These false teachers had heard the gospel message of Jesus Christ but had rejected it. Christians in Jesus' day were called people of *the way*. These false teachers are people who have veered from *the way* to make their *own way* and lead others astray.

Balaam was a false prophet who was willing to curse God's people for money. Peter exposed the greed of false teachers who deceived and exploited people for their own personal gain.

False teachers are no different today; every modern day Balaam has their price. They may appear to be in it for ministry but it doesn't take long to realise they are in it for their own personal gain. They will do anything to feed their greed. Peter called this the *wages of wickedness*. Their wages of wickedness will ultimately earn the wages of sin which results in death, **Romans 6:23** says *for the wages of sin is death*. In Joshua 13:22 we read that Joshua put to death Balaam. The wages of his sin for Balaam was death.

Peter said these teachers appear to have something refreshing to offer. But the truth is that they are like wells without water that have nothing to satisfy people thirst. Jesus said in John 4:14 *but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.*

True teaching should be like springs where the believers find instruction, direction, and comfort; but false teachers have nothing to impart. The Word of God is the water of life, which refreshes the person that receive it; but these false teachers are determined to spread and promote error, and therefore offer nothing, because there is no truth in them. They claim to lead people into the light but what they really do is lead people into *blackest darkness*.

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2 Peter 2:18-19 *For they mouth empty, boastful words and, by appealing to the lustful desires of the flesh, they entice people who are just escaping from those who live in error. ¹⁹They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity-for “people are slaves to whatever has mastered them.”* These false teachers promise what they cannot deliver. Though they promise freedom, their teaching and lifestyle drag the people into enslavement. This so called *freedom* is really enslavement to sin.

It is a good time to remind us that the **grace** that God has freely given us does not provide us with a licence to sin. Paul wrote in Romans 6:1-2 *What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? ²By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?* What the false teachers offer is nothing more than cheap grace.

The Apostle John wrote this in 1 John 4:1 *Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.* Part of growing up in maturity as a Christian is using discernment. We need to test what people say. Initially their message may not be false but ultimately they will subtly introduce teaching that is contrary to the Word of God. We must always use the Word of God to measure their words.

2 Peter 2:20-22 *If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and are overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning. ²¹It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them. ²²Of them the proverbs are true: “A dog returns to its vomit,” and, “A sow that is washed returns to her wallowing in the mud.”* Peter once again talked about those people who knew the way of righteousness through Jesus, but they choose to reject Him. They may appear to be authentic but are in fact counterfeit. They may pass themselves off as true Christians for a while but eventually their deeds will give them away.

1 John 2:19 *They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us.* These false teachers were never saved. They were aware of the truth but they never allowed it to transform their hearts and lives.

As a result they are in a worse position as those who have never heard. They knew enough about the Christian faith to conduct themselves in a way that appeared genuine. But eventually their lifestyle gave the game away.

Peter likened their behaviour to dogs and pigs. In Peter’s day dogs were seen as unclean animals, wild and vicious, not pets like we have today. People who turn their back on the truth are like dogs who return to their vomit. They are also like freshly bathed pigs that return to the mud. In the end their true nature is revealed.

To summarise chapter 2, false teachers are people who seek to obtain power of financial gain for themselves, regardless of how it affects other people. Initially their message may not be false, but their motivation is. They strategically introduce teaching that is contrary to the truth. We need to reject any teaching that denies the Lordship of Jesus Christ and does not line up with the Word of God.

If it doesn’t line up with the Word of God it is wrong! We have to reject it.