

## 2 Peter 2:10-16 False Teachers, Their Characteristics

### Verse 10

Two recurring characteristics follow false teachers:

1 – They walk according to the flesh.

2 – They despise authority.

*Authority* – The word is *kuriotes* which is kin to the word for lord (*kurios*). It means “lordship, dominion, or power”. Jude uses this same word in the context of angelic majesties (Jude 8) as does Paul in Col. 1:16 and Ephesians 1:21.

*Daring* – Presumptuous boldness.

*Self-willed* – Arrogant, self-pleasing. The only other use of this word is in 1 Tim. 1:7 where elders are warned not to be *self-willed*.

*They do not tremble when they revile angelic majesties* – The word *majesties* is *doxa* which means “glory” or here “glorious beings”. It is a very foolish thing for us to pronounce judgement against angels.

### Verse 11

Whereas angels...do not bring a reviling judgment against them before the Lord – Note the parallel passage in Jude 8-13. Even Michael the archangel did not bring a railing judgment, but said, “The Lord rebuke you!” We see the two characteristics of false teachers clearly:

Flesh – They are prideful and elevate their own abilities.

Authority – They have no respect.

How do we respond to Satan?

We are to be watchful – 1 Peter 5:8

We are to resist him – 1 Peter 5:9, James 4:7

When the Devil confronted Jesus in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11) He resisted Him by using the Word of God. Notice Matthew 4:4, 7, 10 – “*It is written...*”, “*It is written...*”, “*It is written...*”

The haughty, self-sufficient spirit of false teachers is similar to the Jewish exorcists of Acts 19:11-16. It is a serious and dangerous thing to revile angelic majesties!

### Verse 12

*Like unreasoning animals* - Animals act mainly on *instinct*. They do not have the rational powers that God granted only to man.

*Reviling where they have no knowledge* – The word for “*reviling*” is “*blasphemeo*” which means to speak evil of or to speak in an abusive or angry manner.

*Will in the destruction of those creatures also be destroyed* – These men who behave at the level of animals can expect the fate of animals. They will have no higher earthly destiny than that of the irrational creatures their behavior resembles. More solemn yet, they are eternally doomed (2:17).

### Verse 13

*Suffering wrong as the wages of doing wrong* -God will punish them in keeping with their crimes.

*They...revel in the daytime* – They enjoy parading their “liberated” life-style.

*They are stains and blemishes* – They soil the spiritual nature of any activity in which they are involved.

*Reveling in their deceptions as they carouse with you* – This probably refers to the Lord’s supper as the parallel in Jude 12 suggests. False teachers are only too happy to take part in such meetings and use them as an opportunity to feast with the very believers they are trying to sway to their teachings.

#### **Verse 14**

*Having eyes full of adultery and that never cease from sin* – They cannot look at women (or men) without lustful desires.

*Enticing unstable souls* – Their desire is to seduce immature or carnal young believers in the congregation. *Entice* literally means “to catch by a bait, to deceive”. James uses this word to describe how our lusts catch us or deceive us (James 1:14).

*Having a heart trained in greed* – The word for trained is used for the type of exercise that goes on in a gymnasium. These false teachers have a lot of experience in enticing unstable souls. They know how to tug at the heartstrings and sound so sincere. Jesus described them in Matthew 7:15

*Accursed children* – Literally this reads, “*children of a curse*”. Peter is ultimately thinking of the fall and curse that came upon all as the result of Adam and Eve’s sin. Sexual misbehavior is one of the deeds of the flesh Paul lists in Galatians 5:19. The lure of sexual impurity has existed at all times and in all places. Note 1 Corinthians 5, Revelation 2:20, Nehemiah 13:26, etc.

#### **Verse 15**

*Forsaking the right way they have gone astray, having followed the way of Balaam...who loved the wages of unrighteousness* – The story of Balaam is told in Numbers 22 -24. Balaam is the classic example of a false teacher who leads people astray for his own personal gain. Because of his greed and love of money he led Israel into sin. If the price is right will you exchange principle for profit?

#### **Verse 16**

*But he received a rebuke...for a dumb donkey, speaking with the voice of a man, restrained the madness of the prophet* – Ironically, Balaam’s animal was actually smarter than his master. The point is that a person who pursues profit when he is supposed to be serving God is more stupid than an unreasoning animal (a donkey) that is known for its stubbornness.

*The madness of the profit* – It is crazy to pursue financial gain by manipulating spiritual realities. The outcome of Balaam’s sin is recorded in Joshua 13:22: “The sons of Israel also killed Balaam the son of Beor, the diviner, with the sword...”