

2 Peter

Enemy Teachers (2)

2 Peter 2:15-22

10-13-24

HDBC

Continuation of the passage that we began when we were last in 2 Peter. In ch. 2 Peter provides six vivid illustrations to help us understand the nature of false teachers. We looked at two of them last week.

False teachers are Like Arrogant Daredevils & Like Wild Animals (12-14)

This morning let's look at four other illustrations. **They are . . .**

1. Like Balaam (15-16)

Balaam was a man in the Old Testament. He was a wicked prophet. There were times when God spoke through him, but he had an evil heart. God used him in spite of his sinful heart. His story is one of the more bizarre stories of the Bible. Peter points out three things about Balaam. I'll use those three things to remind you of his story. Each one points to the same character flaws in false teachers.

A. He left the right road for the wrong road

The ***right way*** involved being obedient to God's word. ***Forsaking*** denotes a **direct, deliberate rebellion against the Scripture**. Balaam was a man who knew the law. He knew the right then to do and rejected it. In rejecting the right road, he went astray. **If you reject the right answer the only thing left is error**. If you say no to the proper path, the only one left is the improper one.

B. He was motivated by money

He ***loved the wages of unrighteousness***. He realized he could make more money being sinful than by being godly. He was hired by Balak, the king of Moab, to curse the people of Israel. Balak knew that the Israelites were a military threat and he wanted to do whatever he could to bring harm to them. He hired a prophet to put

a curse on them. Keep in mind that Balak was a pagan king who believed in such things. The story is found in Numbers 22-24.

He initially appeared to be a faithful man of God. But it quickly becomes clear that he was money-hungry and only used the façade of spirituality for personal gain. False teachers do the same!

When Balak tried to hire him to curse the people of God he should have immediately rebuked Balak and walked away. Instead, flirted with it and ultimately negotiated. When he tried to rebuke the people of God a blessing came out of his mouth instead.

C. He was rebuked by a donkey

In one of the more humorous experiences recorded in the Old Testament we read about Balaam traveling to curse the people of Israel. Suddenly his donkey stopped on the trail and refused to budge. He beat the poor donkey. The donkey was able to see what Balaam was not able to see, a warrior angel with sword drawn ready to strike. In a display of sovereign irony the donkey was not only able to see what the prophet could not see, but was able to speak to the prophet. Imagine that! This man who was supposed to be a man of God was rebuked by a talking donkey.

Through the talking donkey the ***madness of the prophet was restrained***. His greed had caused him to lose sight of all that was really important.

In a sad finale to this event, we read that Balaam found a way to hurt the people of God and help the enemies of God. He made it clear to Balak that the way to get God to judge His own people was to lead them into sexual immorality. If Balak could do that, God would judge them and make them weak and defenseless. How sad the one who wore the mantle of a man of God would bring harm to the people of God for personal gain. **False teachers do the same.**

2. Like Dry Springs (17)

The next comparison involves a couple of metaphors about water, the most essential natural commodity for that arid region. A spring promises water, refreshment and even life. But if it is dry, it promises what it cannot provide. If the well is dry it can provide no life-giving water. **A Bible teacher promises life through his teaching. But if he is a false teacher his words cannot deliver what they promise.**

In that region the sea breezes periodically bring in mist and fog that appear to signal rain that never comes. Again, it promises what it cannot deliver. The land and people are left parched and dry. In a similar way, false teachers promise what they cannot deliver. They leave people spiritually parched and dry.

Peter then pronounced a scathing judgment on them. ***For whom the black darkness has been reserved.*** Just reading those words makes me shiver. This is certainly a reference to hell, the place of eternal punishment where both fire and darkness are said to be present.

3. Like Deceptive Salesmen (18-19)

Salesmen get a bad rap! Especially car salesmen. Not all salesmen deserve the reputation that is often attached to that profession. Many, maybe most, are honest, reputable individuals. However, there are some who will say whatever is needed, to make the sale. They will promise anything and everything just to get your money.

When I read verses 18-19, it seems that these false teachers are being compared to the most hypocritical salesman imaginable. Note what we find here. **They use flattery, sensuality and vanity** to deceive those who are most vulnerable. In their own arrogance they believe they can persuade anyone to believe their lies. They will use whatever means needed. They appeal to the carnal nature of those whom they are seeking to deceive. They preach a message that leads the hearers to think selfishly rather than of God's glory.

They promise what they can never deliver and what they themselves do not actually experience—**freedom**. The false teachers are slaves to the corruption which they teach and are attempting to lead others into that same slavery. It is almost as if they are passengers on a sinking ship and they want to drag as many others as possible down with them.

4. Like the Proverbial Dog and Pig (20-22)

These final verses once again show the hypocrisy of the false teachers. Verse 20 particularly highlights this. They **escaped the defilements of the world** in the sense that they have become religious. **They were acting the part of being Christ-followers**. They were pursuing religious activity which involved the rejection of some of the more obvious defilements of the world.

They had a knowledge of the Lord and of salvation. That knowledge moved them toward Christ and away from the world. But because they are not truly converted, they are once again entangled in the sin that is characteristic of those who have not been saved. **Without a true saving relationship with Christ it is impossible to escape the snare of sin that is found not only in the world but in our own hearts and minds.**

The last state has become worst for them than the first. This is a stunning statement. Ignorance of the truth is better than apostasy from the truth. How can this be? How is it better for a person to have never known the truth than to have known it and turn away from it? **Swindoll offers three good reasons:**

- 1) **Someone ignorant of the truth can still be led to salvation.**
- 2) **Those ignorant of the truth don't tend to influence others.**
- 3) **In the judgement, the severity of punishment will be less for them.**

For those who have a knowledge of salvation and reject it, the punishment will be greater. I don't understand all the particulars, but this is the clear teaching of Scripture.

In hearing and knowing the truth, but then rejecting it, they are like the proverbial dog and pig. The dog returns to his vomit and eats it. There are few things more disgusting than this. It is just downright gross. **The other involves the pig**. Imagine a pig that has been cleaned up and made to look as good as a pig can. Maybe he is being taken to the state fair to be judged and his is all cleaned up. When he has a chance he will go right back to the mud hole.

In the Bible both dogs and pigs are considered detestable animals. This is the final comparison that Peter makes when describing the false teachers of his day. They were detestable in the eyes of God.

Takeaways from this passage:

1. False teaching is a favorite weapon of the enemy. He uses it often.
2. False teaching is by nature, deceptive. Sounds right, but is very wrong.
3. A strange story from the Old Testament is affirmed as true. (Balaam)
4. The doctrine of eternal punishment is affirmed. Includes false teachers.

Hate to spend the entire time on **false teachers** and **false teaching**.
Close with a reminder of a few **things that are true**.

1. **God loves us in spite of our sinful natures and actions.**
2. **Sin is bad. It separates us from God and condemns us.**
3. **Jesus died for our sins and will forgive us if we trust Him.**
4. **Each person has a decision to make. What will you do with Jesus?**

John Harper was born into a Christian family May 29, 1872. He became a Christian 13 years later and had already started preaching by age 17. He received training at the Baptist Pioneer Mission in London, and in 1896 he founded a church, now known as Harper Memorial Church, which began with 25 worshipers but had grown to 500 members by the time he left 13 years later.

In 1912 Harper, the newly called pastor of Moody Church in Chicago, was traveling on the Titanic with his 6-year-old daughter. After the ship struck an iceberg and began to sink, he got Nana into a lifeboat but apparently made no effort to follow her. Instead, he ran through the ship yelling, "Women, children, and unsaved into the lifeboats!"

Survivors report that he then began witnessing to anyone who would listen. He continued preaching even after he had jumped into the water and was clinging to a piece of wreckage (he'd already given his lifejacket to another man).

Harper's final moments were recounted four years later at a meeting in Hamilton, Ontario, by a man who said:

I am a survivor of the Titanic. When I was drifting alone on a spar that awful night, the tide brought Mr. Harper of Glasgow, also on a piece of wreck, near me. "Man," he said, "are you saved?" "No," I said, "I am not." He replied, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

The waves bore him away, but, strange to say, brought him back a little later, and he said, "Are you saved now?" "No," I said, "I cannot honestly say that I am." He said again, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," and shortly after he went down; and there, alone in the night, and with two miles of water under me, I believed. I am John Harper's last convert.

He was also one of only six people picked out the water by the lifeboats; the other 1,522, including Harper, died in the water.

When you have a chance to be saved, you gotta take it.