



WHEN THE HERETICS GO MARCHING IN PT. 2 2 PETER 2:10b-22

Man, Peter is just taking off the gloves here. He is enraged. One commentator points out that the last recorded words of Jesus to Peter—which we find in Jn 21—are command three times in a row to feed my lambs.

Supremely Arrogant

Bold and willful, they do not tremble as they blaspheme the glorious ones, 11 whereas angels, though greater in might and power, do not pronounce a blasphemous judgment against them before the Lord. Now these two verses are the most difficult interpret in this passage and there are two main views here.

- (1) These teachers blaspheme sinless angels who refuse to blaspheme them in return.
- (2) These teachers blaspheme the evil angels of vs. 4—something sinless angels refuse to do.

Interpretive Paraphrase: These teachers *confidently* blaspheme angelic beings who are *far* greater in might and power than they are. But even the most powerful, sinless angels don't do that! The point is their arrogant audacity to discount, mock, ridicule angels far more powerful than them—as if they have that kind of clout. They'll do it boldly. "I'm on the level where I can say what I want about angels—I'm not scared. Those angels wouldn't dare touch me." False teachers are supremely arrogant whereas true teachers are characterized by reverent humility before God.

True teachers are stunned at the privilege they have to unfold God's word for God's people. Piper just came out with a free video preaching course, and he reminded me of the stunning privilege preachers enjoy. He points out that Eph. 3:8 Paul says that those the least of the saints, this grace was given—to preach to the unsearchable riches of Christ. Who else gets to do that? Marinating in the treasures of God's word in order to put those treasures on display for God's people. Appointed by God to preach his word to his people—and unlike these false teachers who don't tremble, true teachers tremble to think they would displease God. Even as I worked through this text, God reminded me this isn't marketing, it's my church. Preach it. False teachers are supremely arrogant. True teachers are characterized by reverent humility.

Governed by Feelings

12 But these, like irrational animals, creatures of instinct, born to be caught and destroyed, blaspheming about matters of which they are ignorant, will also be destroyed in their destruction, 13 suffering wrong—that is, be punished—as the wage for their wrongdoing. Now Peter is repeating a warning that we've seen already in his letters. He compares them to animals in a very specific way. Look at this might even underline it—they are irrational animals, creatures of instinct. They're not guided by what they know, they're guided by what they feel, instinct, craving. Rob Bell, *Love Wins* p. 2, "Has God created millions of people over tens of thousands of years who are going to spend eternity in anguish? Can God do this, or even allow this, and still claim to be a loving God?" According to instinct—no. According to the Word, unquestionably. Mt. 7:12-13. Not to mention the text in front of us in which Peter has been telling us that these false teachers will be destroyed for 12 verses now.

Now, this is describing false teachers, but it's hard to overstate how relevant this is for us today especially in how we formulate our ethics. "I feel like this is loving, so I do it or support it. I feel like this is unloving so I'm against it. I feel like this is good and healthy, so it's ok." Peter is telling us here that when we have the Word in front of us and we don't conform our feelings and instincts to it—he says that's what animals do. It's not just unwise it's unhuman. Like you just follow your heart and do whatever makes you happy—your dog does that.

True teachers are governed by the Word. True teachers don't just say what's popular or teach what they feel is right. They live in Ps. 25, "Make me to know your ways, O LORD; teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all the day long." True teachers choose to teach the hard right over the easy wrong. I've said already that most false teaching you'll see is on FB. Rachel Hollis Girl Wash You Face, "This is your life. You are meant to be the hero of your own story." A true teacher—remembers 2 Tim. 2:25 that we're to correct our opponents with gentleness—and say, "Ms. Hollis, Gal. 2:20. Jn 3:30." Despite what our creaturely instincts tell us, we're not the hero of our own story, Jesus is. And our lives are meant to be a testimony to how heroic and excellence we are but how heroic and excellent Christ is. False teachers are governed by feelings...

Indulge In Shameless Excess

You'll remember Matt. 6, says you'll know false prophets by their fruit—not just by their prophecies coming true.. They count it pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, while they feast with you. 14 They have eyes full of adultery, insatiable for sin., They entice unsteady souls. They have hearts trained in greed. Accursed children! Peter says these people don't even try to hide they're shameless acts—broad daylight in public at your meals looking for a hookup. Phrase full of adultery in vs. 14 literally means, "full of an adulteress" Michael Green says it this way, "It becomes impossible for them to look upon any woman without reflecting on her likely sexual performance." Women are sexual opportunities—they are skilled at capitalizing. That word "trained"—hearts trained in greed—is where we get our word for gymnasium. Satisfying their fleshly desires has become like a sport they've practiced for. That's awful, how could anybody endorse that lifestyle. Miley Cyrus's It's our party, "It's our party, we can do what we want. It's our party, we can say what we want. It's our party, we can love who we want. We can kiss who we want. We can [hookup with] who[ever] we want." This could easily have been the soundtrack to these verses. The moral compass of our culture is very similar to what we see here in these false teachers—shameless excess.

True teachers are characterized by personal holiness. In 1 Tim 4:16, where Paul says "Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers." That the life of the pastor is connected in some way to the salvation of those in his congregation. God's blessing upon my preaching in the pulpit, is affected by the life I live outside of the pulpit. God anoints and blesses the preaching of godly men in ways that he doesn't with ungodly men—even if they give the same sermon. Robert Murray McCheyne, "It is not great talents God blesses so much as great likeness to Jesus. A holy minister is an awful weapon in the hand of God. A word spoken by you when your conscience is clear, and your heart full of God's Spirit, is worth ten thousand words spoken in unbelief and sin." To be sure, this doesn't mean the pastors are holier than everyone else in the church, it means that whatever God does to build the church through an ungodly minister he does despite him, not because of him. False teachers are characterized by shameless excess, true teachers by personal holiness...

Selfish

15 Forsaking the right way, they have gone astray. They have followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved gain from wrongdoing, 16 but was rebuked for his own transgression; a speechless donkey spoke with human voice and restrained the prophet's madness. Now here Peter draws on an interesting story from Numbers 22. Balaam was essentially an evil prophet. And was going to get paid by a king to curse Israel. And as he's on his way an angel with a sword blocks the road and his donkey stops. But he can't see the angel so he beats his donkey who God allows to speak to him and rebuke him. He finally sees the Angel and repents. The irony is rich, "A dumb [donkey] possessed sounder prophetic vision than a religious official whose moral sense had been perverted by gain from wrong-doing." Like Balaam, these false teachers don't care about the consequences of their doctrine and practice for the church, as long as it helps them rise. Ministry is a vehicle for personal advancement. And preaching and prayer are just means to climb the ladder in "Jesus' name." False teachers are selfish, but true teachers are servants.

If I could just be completely honest with you, one of the most difficult parts of ministry is measuring success. I don't know a single minister who wants to be failure. But what does that look like? Growing church? Increased giving. People like you? Joel Osteen church has all of those. Even when you figure it out, it's easy for that to become more important than Christ. Elders walked through Greear's leadership book, "Ministry, you see, is a great place for guys with the idol of success to hide, because we can mask our selfish ambition in the cloak of doing great things for God." J.D. Greear Like it's embarrassing to admit but I'm tempted to compare my preaching with others, compare our size and growth with others. When pastors get together "How many y'all run?" It's like asking how much you bench, or asking a business man how much money they make. I'm not immune from this temptation but I want to be clear, visitors as much as I'd love for you to be a part of our church, I care much more that you're a part of a church (examples). I'm not about just our church, or a future church. "So glad you're here while you're getting your PhD." Not immune to the temptation, but this isn't a stepping stone, and I have no plans to leave. I love this church. False teachers are selfish whereas true teachers are servants... #5

Deceptively Attractive

17 These are waterless springs and mists driven by a storm. For them the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved. This is great imagery here. False teachers are like a spring that looks like it offers life-giving water but doesn't. Like a mist that looks like it could water the dry ground, but it's blown away. And he tells us who they target and how they do it. 18 For, speaking loud boasts of folly, they entice by sensual passions of the flesh those who are barely escaping from those who live in error. I take that to mean people who have just professed faith in Christ. 19 They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption. Don't miss the tragic irony: they promise freedom through the very corruption that makes them slaves. For whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved. False teachers target new believers. They know that the people who are most vulnerable to false teaching are the ones who haven't had time to be around a lot of true teaching. And the way they attract these folks is by promising them freedom. Freedom from any moral boundaries other than the ones you make for yourself especially when it comes to sex. They entice by sensual passion. That word "entice" comes from fishing. They bait these folks into embracing the idea that the bedroom is a public playground where the only ethic is consent. Miley Cyrus's It's our party, "It's our party, we can do what we want. It's our party, we can say what we want. It's our party, we can love who we want. We can kiss who we want. We can [hookup with] who[ever] we want." Boundaryless limitless living—that's what these teachers and our culture embrace as true freedom. False teachers are deceptively attractive.

True teachers are genuinely helpful. True teachers show their people that freedom is not the absence of boundaries. Freedom is the presence of the right boundaries. It's not freedom from any master, but

freedom to the right master. Where is a fish most free? In the water. A fish is most free and prospers most when it lives within the constraints of its nature and design.

If jumps out of the water, it might be fun, sun shine might feel good—it will lead to death. And friends when it comes to the Christian life, living in God’s presence under God’s reign is that water. That’s how we were designed to live, in his presence under his rule. And true freedom and prosperity is only found living according to that design. 2 Chron. 24:20, “Thus says God, ‘Why do you break the commandments of the LORD, so that you cannot prosper?’” Why are you jumping out of the water? Obedience is God’s non-optional strategies for flourishing. Never be more free than when you can only live according to God’s design. False teachers are deceptively attractive but true teachers are genuinely helpful...

Ultimately Destructive

20 For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome. Scholars disagree about whether Peter is talking about the false teachers returning to their old ways, or the new believers he just mentioned. But the point he is making applies to both—that for false teachers or believers who fully and finally deny Christ the last state has become worse for them than the first. 21 For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them. 22 What the true proverb says has happened to them: “The dog returns to its own vomit, and the sow, after washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire.” The uncomfortable but clear truth here is that if you’re listening today and you fully and finally deny Christ—it would be better had you not been here. Jesus says in Lk. 12 the servant who knew his masters will and didn’t do will receive a severe beating, but he who didn’t know his masters will receive a light beating. To whom much is given, much will be required. Even for unbelievers, there will be a measure of accountability based on knowledge. And it will be worse for the person who head about and even professed Christ and fell away than the person who never heard.

Which then naturally leads to the question, is this text teaching that you can lose your salvation? It describes these people as having formerly escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ? So can you? And in vs. 22, Peter give us two proverbs illustrating the same reality that help us answer that question with a “No.” See the picture Peter gives us: A dog vomits—leaves behind that which is foul—but then embraces it again. The sow—female pig—bathes herself, and returns to the mud. But for some reason, you and I aren’t surprised to hear that the pig goes back to the mud. Why? Because she’s a pig. Bathing doesn’t change her nature—she’s not a new creation. And for whatever effort she puts into her bath, she’s still a cleaned groomed nice smelling...pig who will invariably do pig things.

Neither animal in Peter’s proverb undergoes a change in nature, only a change in behavior. And that’s just Peter’s point. No this isn’t teaching you can lose your salvation—that you can unbecome a new creation. These people—false teachers or believers who deny Christ—aren’t examples of people who were born again—received new life in Christ. They’re examples of people who dressed up, cleaned up, brushed up but were still dead in their sins. Perhaps renovated their lifestyles, adopted some Christian ethics and language, stopped saying the F word, made a real effort at a morally polished life, but were never experienced heart transforming grace and rescue. Those who are truly saved can’t be snatched from God.

Jn. 10:28, I give them eternal life and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. In Phil. 1:6, “and I am sure of this, he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion on the day of Christ Jesus.” Ephesians 1:13-14 “in him you also when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation...”