

Studies in 2 Peter (10)  
The Character of  
False Teachers (2)  
**2 Peter 2:10-16**



## 2 Peter - Previously

- Our past 3 lessons, we have addressed the false teachers of **2 Peter 2**. We have noted the warnings about the presence of false teachers and their destiny (unless they repent).
- Today we begin to address their character described in **2 Peter 2:10-17**.



# The Context

- **2 Peter 2:1-10**

After warnings about false teachers, Peter addressed how God can and will punish these false teachers (like the angels that sinned, the world that perished in the flood, and Sodom & Gomorrah).

- He also noted that God knows how to deliver the godly (like righteous Lot).
- There IS a day of judgment coming. This leads to a description of the character of these false teachers.



## The character of false teachers - 2:10ff

- They walk according to the flesh, in the lust of uncleanness.
- *“Those who indulge in the flesh in its corrupt desires”* (NASB)  
Often these false teachers are caught up in immoral practices and lifestyles.  
At times, these immoral practices demonstrate a character that does not hold truth with high regard.



## The character of false teachers - 2:10ff

- They walk according to the flesh, in the lust of uncleanness.
- NOTE: This expression is tied to **vs. 6-9**, Sodom & Gomorrah. Descriptive of the TYPE of behavior dealing with these teachers (**cf. Romans 1:24-27, Ephesians 4:17-20**)
- **Jude 7** parallels our context, which ties this expression to Sodom.



## The character of false teachers - 2:10ff

- They walk ... despising authority
- Lit. “Despising lordship”. Who are these?
- 1) World leaders? - Plausible, BUT such often tolerate the immoral behavior.  
However, one willing to break God’s law this way, might also be willing to break civil law (embezzlement, deceit, illegal immoral practices)



## The character of false teachers - **2:10ff**

- They walk ... despising authority
- Lit. “Despising lordship”. Who are these?
- 2) Divine authority? God (or perhaps His angels). **2 Peter 2:1**



## The character of false teachers - **2:10ff**

- They walk ... despising authority
- Lit. “Despising lordship”. Who are these?
- 3) Spiritual leaders?  
E.g., Noah (**vs. 5**)  
E.g., **2 Peter 1:16** - Peter likely charged  
E.g., Elders - **Titus 1:9-13** - insubordinate,  
idle talkers & deceivers, whose mouths must  
be stopped
- NOTE: This might also be related to Sodom  
(**cf. Genesis 19:5-11**)



## The character of false teachers - 2:10ff

- They are presumptuous
- Daring and improperly bold
- There is a willful blindness - **Matthew 23:16**

**Matthew 15:14 (cf. 2 Peter 2:3)**

**2 Corinthians 4:4** - whose mind the god of this age has blinded.

He presumes he is right, even though the truth indicates he is not! (And he may even know the actual truth, but he doesn't care)



## The character of false teachers - 2:10ff

- They are self-willed
- Arrogant, stubborn and selfish  
They want their own way and reject anything else.
- CLEARLY, these care more about themselves than others (or the truth)



## The character of false teachers - 2:10ff

- Not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries
- “Speak evil” - βλασφημέω (blasphēmeō)
  - blaspheme - to revile or speak against with the intention of doing harm
- Going even further than angels dare to go



## The character of false teachers - 2:10ff

- Not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries
- “Dignitaries” - glorious ones (LSB, ESV), “angelic majesties” (NASB)  
But it is NOT the word for “angels”
- Thus, while it COULD refer to such, consider that it could also be spiritual leaders (who are also messengers of God) - apostles, elders, preachers, etc.



## The character of false teachers - 2:10ff

- Not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries
- **Vs. 11** contrasts their behavior with godly angels who will not bring a reviling accusation against THEM before the Lord.
- Thus, I believe the dignitaries are reference to spiritual leaders who have challenged and exposed their errors (**cf. Ephesians 5:11**)



## The character of false teachers - 2:10ff

- Not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries
- Whoever these godly leaders are, these false teachers reject those sent by God and perhaps even God Himself.
- **Cf. Matthew 27:39** – they blasphemed Jesus on the cross  
**Luke 23:39** - one of the criminals blasphemed Him  
**Acts 13:45** - Paul at Antioch was blasphemed (**cf. Romans 3:8**).



## The character of false teachers - 2:10ff

- Not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries
- This is descriptive of a rebellious attitude. If these men are confronted with the truth, they will strongly and harshly reject it and those who challenge them.
- **Jude 8-10** is a parallel, giving reference to Michael the archangel vs. the devil. Why refuse to rebuke him?
- He didn't need to! GOD would take care of it, JUST like these.



## The character of false teachers - 2:10ff

- They speak evil against things they do not understand (**12**)
- Again, “blaspheme”. They slander ignorantly against spiritual truths. Often willfully!
- Consider critics of truth who twist what is being taught
  - 1) Skeptics - supposed contradictions
  - 2) Merit based salvation



## The character of false teachers - 2:10ff

- They speak evil against things they do not understand (**12**)
- **2 Peter 3:3-5** - false teaching about the Lord's return. They "willfully forget..."
- **2 Timothy 3:7**, always learning...
- **Philippians 3:19** - enemies of the cross of Christ - who set their mind on earthly things (**1 Corinthians 2:13-14** - the "natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God..."). This is willful. They refuse to TRAIN their minds to discern the truth.



## The character of false teachers - 2:10ff

- They speak evil against things they do not understand (**12**)
- NOTE: A problem we are facing today is criticism against preachers and teachers who challenge error and expose false teachers. It is not uncommon to malign their critics by twisting their words and motives.
- This is exactly what they did to Jesus.  
**Matthew 26:62, John 2:19-20.**  
One might ask, “did they know what He meant?”  
My answer: Why did they not investigate to clarify?



## Application: Who is a false teacher?

- Peter is very concerned about these false teachers. We see that in the strength of his language.
- As we can see, their character is as corrupt as their teachings! BUT....
- We need to clearly understand that what makes a false teacher is his teaching!
- **Cf. Philippians 1:15-18**, we have those teaching truth out of spite for Paul but it was still truth. And Paul rejoiced that truth was being taught. Even a corrupt teacher can convert the lost IF he is teaching the truth!



## Application: Who is a false teacher?

- We need to clearly understand that what makes a false teacher is his teaching!
- Contrast this with Paul, who was sincere, but taught error UNTIL he was converted  
**Cf. Acts 23:1, 1 Timothy 1:12-13.**  
His sincerity did NOT make what he taught the truth.
- IF you are teaching or following error, motives do not matter! You are still in error! BUT if your motives are corrupt, you will answer for that also!



## Application: Who is a false teacher?

- The point:
- While false teaching is ALWAYS false (and the one teaching error is a false teacher), their character is revealed WHEN they are confronted with the truth.
- Will they continue to teach error with selfish pursuits and malign their “critics”?  
OR will they repent and change, like Apollos (**Acts 18:25-28**)?



It matters what we teach  
and what we believe!  
Will you accept “the whole  
counsel of God”?



Let us pray!