

## PETER'S EPISTLES

### **2 Peter: Spiritually Maturing Opposite Apostasy**

#### **IV. Telltale Characteristics Of False Teachers**

(2 Peter 2:10-16)

#### **I. Introduction**

- A. In A. D. 66, the year before his martyrdom, Peter desired that fellow believers might mature in the Christian faith in order to combat the rising opposition of heresies that the Church already faced. (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, "Introduction to the Second Letter of Peter," p. 1765; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 862)
- B. Peter thus wrote this epistle to call believers to spiritual growth in preparation for apostasy, and 2 Peter 2:10-16 described characteristics of false teachers we need to know for our discernment. We view it for insight:

#### **II. Telltale Characteristics Of False Teachers, 2 Peter 2:10-16. (Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 871-873)**

- A. False teachers are *insubordinate*, 2 Peter 2:10-12a:
1. Where Christ's apostles emphasized the need for purity in the Christian's walk, false teachers follow the lusts of the sinful nature in rebellion against the Lord, 2 Peter 2:10a; *Ibid.*, p. 871.
  2. However, they go further to slander even angelic beings, possibly demons, what even godly angels who are greater in might and power than the demons do not do, 2 Peter 2:10b-11; *Ibid.*, p. 872.
  3. The false teachers slander without even understanding what they slander, 2 Peter 2:12b ESV.
- B. False teachers are *animalistic*, 2 Peter 2:12a,c:
1. The false teachers operate from baser instincts like irrational beasts, 2 Peter 2:12a ESV.
  2. They are creatures of instinct, *physika*, "belonging to nature, following natural desires, v. 12a ESV; *Ibid.*
  3. Like mere brute beasts, their only value is being caught and destroyed, 2 Peter 2:12c ESV; *Ibid.*
- C. False teachers are *deceitful*, 2 Peter 2:13:
1. Though the false teachers try to present themselves as spiritual leaders who have a special level of spiritual knowledge, God will repay them for the harm they do to others, 2 Peter 2:13a; *Ibid.*
  2. However, they do not even hide their sin under cover of darkness, but carouse in broad daylight as if it was righteous to do so, reveling in their *apatais*, their deceptions, even while joining in believers' love feasts as blots and blemishes to those feasts, 2 Peter 2:13b; *Ibid.*
- D. False teachers are *habitual sinners*, 2 Peter 2:14:
1. The false teachers (literally) have "eyes full of an adulteress," meaning that whenever they look at a woman, they only consider committing adultery with her, 2 Peter 2:14a ESV; *Ibid.*
  2. These false teachers never stop sinning with their eyes, and their deceit only aims at seducing the unwary or the unsteadfast, 2 Peter 2:14b; *Ibid.*
  3. They are specialists in greed, practicing and sharpening their skills in that craft, an accursed brood of people deserving God's wrath, 2 Peter 2:14c; *Ibid.*, p. 872-873.
- E. False teachers are *greedy*, 2 Peter 2:15-16:
1. They like Old Testament Balaam have forsaken the right way, going astray in loving financial gain for wrongdoing in trying to curse Israel for money, 2 Peter 2:15 with Numbers 22-24; *Ibid.*, p. 873.
  2. Though Balaam had wickedly tried to urge the Moabites to trick Israel's men into having illicit sexual relations with Moabite women, introducing immorality into Israel's camp to where God would have to punish Israel's people, God used a mere animal, a mere donkey to check the prophet's madness, his wayward kind of thinking, 2 Peter 2:16; *Ibid.*

**Lesson:** *In brief summary, false teachers are insubordinate, animalistic, deceitful, habitually sinful and greedy.*

**Application:** *(1) May we accordingly avoid teachers (a) who are insubordinate to duly appointed authority, (b) who function according to baser animalistic instincts, (c) who habitually sin, (d) who constantly give themselves to indulging their lusts and (e) who excel in greed. (2) Thus, (a) if a teacher speaks lightly or slanderously about authorities, even of demons or Satan [slandering demons in 2 Peter 2:10b-11], we should not heed him. (b) If a teacher tries to lead believers to relax their self-control in some Church function [love feasts in 2 Peter 2:13] as in the realm of church music, may we not heed him because he promotes a corruptive, unholy influence. (c) If a teacher habitually practices a sin, may we seek to have him repent [or otherwise be removed from office]. (d) May we seek to avoid even the appearance of financial greed in the Church as an evil! (3) Since the characteristics of false teachers all TREND toward EXCESSES, may we watch out for EXCESSES in any and all teachers!*