



BAND of BROTHERS

SUMMER SERIES 2022 – WEEK 3

### 2 Peter 1:16-2:3 – True and False Prophets

*...there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them.*

– 2 Peter 2:1 ESV

- **Peter's testimony of the Transfiguration of Jesus**

*For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. – 2 Peter 1:16 ESV*

- Peter defends his credibility
  - He had witnessed Jesus' **glorification**  
*"...we were eyewitnesses of his majesty"*
  - He had personally heard Jesus' **validation**  
*"...he received honor and glory from God"*
  - He had participated in Jesus' **Transfiguration**  
*"...we were with him on the holy mountain"*
- He declares his superior message  
*"We didn't make this stuff up!"*
  - Peter is defending the **veracity** of the gospel
  - And the **validity** of his role

*This letter is from Simeon Peter, a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ. – vs 1*

- He differentiates between his message and that of the false teachers

*"cleverly devised myths" – sophizō mythos*

- Sophisticated-sounding stories designed to make one appear wise
- Fairy tales disguised as truth
- Man-made ideas masquerading as God’s Word

*“These people honor me with their lips,  
but their hearts are far from me.*

*Their worship is a farce,*

*for **they teach man-made ideas as commands from God.**” – Matthew 15:8-9  
NLT*

- **False** faith results in a **fabricated** gospel
- Jesus warned there would be **fake Messiahs** and **false prophets**

*“Then if anyone tells you, ‘Look, here is the Messiah,’ or ‘There he is,’ don’t believe it. For **false messiahs and false prophets will rise up and perform great signs and wonders so as to deceive, if possible, even God’s chosen ones.** See, I have warned you about this ahead of time. – Matthew 24:23-25 NLT*

- And Peter passed this warning along  
*I want to remind you that in the last days **scoffers will come**, mocking the truth and following their own desires. – 2 Peter 3:3 NLT*
- The same warning is found in the book of Jude  
*But you, my dear friends, must remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ predicted. They told you that in the last times **there would be scoffers** whose purpose in life is to satisfy their ungodly desires. – Jude 1:17-18 NLT*

○ What is a scoffer?

**empaiktēs** – a mocker, someone who derides or dismisses someone or something

- They deny or dismiss the truth regarding Jesus
- They develop and dispense their own “gospel”
- The apostle John warned us about them

*Dear children, the last hour is here. You have heard that the Antichrist is coming, and already many such antichrists have appeared. From this we know that the last hour has come. – 1 John 2:18 NLT*

*I am writing to you not because you don’t know the truth but because you know the difference between truth and lies. And who is a liar? Anyone who says that Jesus is not the Christ. Anyone who denies the Father and the Son is an antichrist. – 1 John 2:21 NLT*

• **The prophetic rather than the pathetic word**

And we have **the prophetic word** more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts... – 2 Peter 1:19 ESV

- Peter hadn't made all this up
  - o It all came from God
  - o It was all part of the sovereign plan of God
  - o And it wasn't up for debate, alteration, or individual interpretation
  - o God had confirmed the words of the prophets with the appearance of Jesus
- He wanted them to pay attention
  - o Listen to the Old Testament prophets
  - o And listen to us!
  - o We are confirming the words of the prophets
    - Jesus was and is the long-awaited Messiah
    - He is the fulfillment of all the prophecies

*Then they brought the apostles before the high council, where the high priest confronted them. "We gave you strict orders never again to teach in this man's name!" he said. "Instead, you have filled all Jerusalem with your teaching about him, and you want to make us responsible for his death!"*

*But Peter and the apostles replied, "We must obey God rather than any human authority. The God of our ancestors raised Jesus from the dead after you killed him by hanging him on a cross. Then God put him in the place of honor at his right hand as Prince and Savior. He did this so the people of Israel would repent of their sins and be forgiven. We are witnesses of these things and so is the Holy Spirit, who is given by God to those who obey him." – Acts 5:27-32 NLT*

- o We are witnesses
  - **epoptēs** – spectator, eyewitness
  - We are declaring what we **saw** and **heard**
  - Our words are like "a lamp shining in a dark place" (19)
    - Illuminating and life-changing
    - Prophetic and profitable
    - Trustworthy and true
- **The sufficiency of Scripture**
  - ...knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. – 2 Peter 1:20-21 ESV

**scripture** – *graphē*

denotes either the book itself, or its contents

*But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the **sacred writings**, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. **All Scripture** is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. – 2 Timothy 3:16-17 NLT*

- **The past repeating itself**

*But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies... – 2 Peter 2:1 ESV*

- Nothing new under the sun

- There were **false prophets** in the past
- There will be **false teachers** in the present
  - Both claim to speak for God
  - But they are **false**

**false** – *pseudēs* – lying, deceitful, pretenders

- And they will teach **heresies**

**heresies** – *hairesis* – a choice, an opinion viewpoint  
A self-determined position that leads to destruction

- They will be **among** you
- They will “**secretly bring in**” their false teaching

“The heretics would seek to add some other teaching to the orthodox faith and or some other teaching as a substitute for the truth. The implication is that they would seek to do this in some underhanded way. They would unobtrusively change the doctrinal foundation of the church and thereby make it unstable. ‘Heresies’ refers to ideas inconsistent with the revealed truth of God.” – Thomas L. Constable, *Notes on 2 Peter*

- What were they teaching?

1. A denial of Christ as Lord and Master

*“denying the Master who bought them” – vs 1*

- Their teaching denied the Lordship of the One they profess to believe in
- They claimed to be Christians, but refused to submit to Jesus as their Lord and Master
- They saw no need to add to their faith the Spirit-empowered qualities Peter talked about

“This verse is not referring to salvation, but outward reformation with no ultimate inward reality. These people did not have their natures changed and so returned to the mud like a pig.” – Matt Perman, <https://www.desiringGod.org>

- They were teaching a form of **behavior modification**
- Self-reform in place of Spirit-empowered transformation

2. The justification of sensuality and immorality

- When you adopt a lower standard of **truth**, you end up accepting a lower standard of **morality**
- Christian teaching that appeals to the physical senses alone is false and destructive

*For I have told you often before, and I say it again with tears in my eyes, that there are many whose conduct shows they are really enemies of the cross of Christ. They are headed for destruction. Their god is their appetite, they brag about shameful things, and they think only about this life here on earth. – Philipians 3:18-19 NLT*

- The book of Jude  
*...ungodly people have wormed their way into your churches, saying that God’s marvelous grace allows us to live immoral lives. – Jude 1:4 NLT*

*...these people—who claim authority from their dreams—live immoral lives, defy authority, and scoff at supernatural beings. – Jude 1:8 NLT*

*...these people scoff at things they do not understand. Like unthinking animals, they do whatever their instincts tell them, and so they bring about their own destruction. – Jude 1:10 NLT*

*...these people are grumblers and complainers, living only to satisfy their desires. They brag loudly about themselves, and they flatter others to get what they want. – Jude 1:16 NLT*

*...these people are the ones who are creating divisions among you. They follow their natural instincts because they do not have God’s Spirit in them. – Jude 1:19 NLT*

3. False words driven by greed

- They were sensual and seductive

“No doctrine, however senseless and monstrous, which under the guise of a religious faith ministers to the sensual appetites of men, will ever want followers.” – John Lillie, *Lectures on the First and Second Epistles of Peter*

*And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed. And in their greed they will exploit you with **false** words*  
– 2 Peter 2:2 ESV

**false** – *plastos* – molded or formed as from clay, artificial, fictitious, counterfeit

“. . . Peter pointed out that the false teachers used ‘feigned words.’ The Greek word is *plastos*, from which we get our English word plastic. Plastic words! Words that can be twisted to mean anything you want them to mean! The false teachers use our vocabulary, but they do not use our dictionary.” – Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*

### **Characteristics of a false teacher**

- Charismatic and persuasive
- Focused on the novel and the new
- Motivated by greed and personal success
- Stress the physical over the spiritual
- Downplay judgment and over-promise blessing
- Dismiss the centrality and sufficiency of Christ

### **The fate of a false teacher**

*But God condemned them long ago, and their destruction will not be delayed.* – 2 Peter 2:3 NLT

- They may enjoy **present success**
- But they will experience **future judgment**

*Like unthinking animals, they do whatever their instincts tell them, and so they bring about their own destruction. What sorrow awaits them!* – Jude 1:10-11 NLT

### **Discussion questions**

What makes the church such an easy target for false teachers to sell their lies? What makes us so susceptible?

How would a solid understanding of God’s Word make a believer less likely to fall for the “plastic” platitudes of false teachers?

False teachers tend to sell some version of “your best life now.” Why is that so appealing and dangerous at the same time?

**FOR NEXT WEEK:** Read 2 Peter 2:4-22 and pages 29-40 in Ken’s Devotionary™ on 2 Peter.