

## Accursed Children

2 Peter 2:10b-16

Series: *Growing in the Knowledge of God – 2 Peter*

**Introduction:** Please take your Bibles and turn with me to the book of 2 Peter – 2 Peter chapter 2.

Beloved, we come back this morning to one of the darkest chapters in the New Testament. And by dark, I do not mean wicked and sinful, I simply mean unpleasant and gloomy. It is not a fun thing to talk about the nature, character, methods and ultimate outcome of false teachers. It's kind of like going to the Dr. for some our pathology report and hearing that we have cancer. It's unpleasant and gloomy, but very necessary. And so it is with this chapter in 2 Peter. These false teachers oppose God and they will be judged by God. And this is not a sermon that scratches the itching ears of post-modern American Christianity. In our post-Christian world we would rather only talk about the things that we agree about and emphasize the points at which we have unity with others. We would rather minimize sound doctrine if it meant that we could avoid offending someone or having them think we are bigoted or intolerant or misogynistic or xenophobic or racist or chauvinistic or just flat out a crazy fundamentalist. But, in God's view of things, the purity of the church and the security of sound doctrine matter infinitely more than whether or not our culture thinks we are bigoted and intolerant because we side with God.

But the cultural pressure of the day has caused many in the church to make peace with false teaching. Why does this happen? Why are we so susceptible to the wily schemes of false teachers? Well, its easier to go with what is popular. Its hard to sniff out what is deceptive and alluring. It is difficult to be in the minority crying out that a popular teacher is in error. Its just easier and less costly to tolerate it all. But that is not what Peter does in this letter. You will remember that after the Resurrection of Jesus he appeared at the Sea of Galilee when Peter and the other disciples had gone back to fishing. And after breakfast Peter and the Lord took a walk and had a heart to heart conversation. "Peter, do you love me?" "Peter, do you love me?" "Peter, do you love me?" Three times he asked the question and three times Peter declared his love for the Lord. And after all three the Lord commissioned Peter to the work of the shepherd of His people. Feed my lambs Peter. Tend my sheep Peter. Feed my sheep Peter. This defined the life mission of Peter for all of his days. And a key part in shepherding a flock is keeping them from danger. You can't just feed sheep good food while also being careless about the poison being slipped in to the food by an enemy of the flock.

And so, this short little letter is written by Peter, inspired by the Spirit of God, to shepherd the flock of God by defending the truth of God from these opponents of God. This means that Peter

needs to paint a dark picture because the character and methods of these false teachers are dark and evil. And this is a kind act of God's mercy to us. How awful it would be if God said nothing to us about the ways and plans and evil purposes of those who were hell-bent on hurting His people! How we would have so much to despise God for if He didn't tell us these things. So, while they are hard to read and study, they are crucial for the church of any age to understand.

Peter's letter is food from God for His flock which is meant to strengthen them and protect them from God's enemy. Here in chapter 2 Peter wants us to be certain about the ways and character and outcome of the false teachers who will crop up in any age in the church. In verses 1-3 he has given us the general sketch of these false teachers. In verses 4-10 he made clear that the Lord will protect His people and he will punish these workers of iniquity. And now in verses 10-22 he is going to color in the sketch that he drew in verses 1-3. In these verses we will see the gloomy shades of character and method and outcome that fill in the sketch of these false teachers. Let's focus our attention this morning on verses 10-16. Let's start reading in verse 9 to get a bit of the context.

The core qualities of these false teachers are that they are pride permeated and lust led. That is the header description given at the beginning of verse 10. God is especially displeased with these who indulge in the lust of defiling passion and despise authority. In our text, Peter describes those in reverse order. He shows their despising of any kind of authority in verses 10-12 and then he exposes their indulgence in the lusts of defiling passions in verses 13-16.

#### **I. False Teachers are Pride Permeated – vs. 10-12**

- a. So, as we look at this expose of the false teachers take notice that Peter does not name their names nor does he really even give us enough clues to know exactly what they are teaching. This is not because he is afraid to hurt anyone's feelings or step on anyone's toes. But rather, it is directed by the Spirit of God to fit for any age of the Church. The reality is the content of a false teacher's teaching will change. They will deny and twist different parts of God's truth in their dastardly work. So, their false teaching will look different, but they will always have these things in common. They will always be filled with pride and they will always be driven by their lusts of the flesh. This is how their spiritual cancer will make itself known.
- b. Peter says they are bold and willful in verse 10. This is a description of their pride. Their boldness is a brazen determination to do what they want to do no matter what they know to be right. We learned in verse 1 that they have denied the Lord who bought them and so now they are showing that denial in their actions. They are bold in their rebellion. They claim to be one of Christ's followers but they are refusing to follow Christ. They have denied His lordship while still daring to claim his name.

- c. They are also willful, which means that they are hell-bent on doing that which pleases them no matter what, or who, stands in their way. They won't even let the Lordship of Christ become a barrier to their wicked sinfulness. They want what they want and they want it now! And isn't this the essence of pride in the human heart? Demanding my way no matter what it might cost or who it might hurt.
- d. But their pride is too refined to be limited to only a few expressions. Not only are they bold and willful, but they are also blasphemous. So, in verse 10 it says that they blaspheme the glorious ones. This is one of the most complicated interpretation issues in Peter's letter. Who are these glorious ones and what are these false teachers doing to blaspheme them? I've mentioned to you before that the letter from Jude is very similar to this letter of 2 Peter. In fact, in some cases you would think they are plagiarizing one another because they use some of the same words. So, turn over there with me real quick because Peter doesn't give us too many details about the glorious ones being blasphemed. He tells us that the angels are greater in might and power than these glorious ones, but not even they will pronounce a blasphemous judgment against these glorious ones. But these false teachers are arrogant enough to rush in where not even angels will tread.
- e. So, in Jude, we have a little more information given to us about the angels who will not pronounce this blasphemous judgment. You're in Jude, look at verses 8 through 10.
- f. We don't know anything else about this incident, because this is the only place in Scripture where it is talked about. But apparently, Satan claimed some kind of authority to take the body of Moses after he died. What was Satan going to do with it? Why did he want it? We don't know. We can make guesses, but they would be just that. That is obviously not related to the point Jude and Peter are making. The point here is that though Satan was opposing God and opposing God's messenger, the archangel, Michael himself, the chief of the angels – Michael still did not presume the place of God and pronounce a judgment on Satan. But rather, even though Michael was greater in power and glory and might than Satan, still, he did not presume to take God's place and pronounce a condemning judgment on Satan. So, in that moment Michael did not cast Satan into hell for this wicked intervention. Rather, Michael submitted himself to the Lord by saying, "The Lord rebuke you."
- g. So, even the elect angels will not condemn and pass judgment upon the fallen angels, even though they have more might and power than those fallen angels. In both of these letters, Jude and 2 Peter, then, my understanding is that the glorious ones are the fallen angels. They are glorious in the sense that they are above man in the creation order. They live in a different realm of God's creation and they have a more magnificent role and function than man. And yet, among the angels, about a 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of them fell from Heaven with Lucifer in rebellion against God. They

are still angelic and glorious in that sense, but they are wicked and evil and powerful and corrupted with sin. And the elect angels, though they are more might and more powerful than the fallen angels, as is seen all throughout the Scriptures, even they will not say something like – “to Hell with you – go where you belong.” Rather they will only say – “the Lord rebuke you.” Why? Because they know their place. They are humble before the Lord their God.

- h. But these false teachers . . . they are another story! Back in 2 Peter, Peter says they blaspheme about matters of which they are ignorant. They are so arrogant that they boldly proclaim some blasphemous boast against the fallen angels, Satan and his demons – but they have no idea what they are talking about. We don’t know for sure what this looked like in Peter’s day. It makes you think of the seven sons of Sceva in Acts 19 who presumed to be able to cast out demons simply by claiming the name of Jesus and of Paul. But the evil spirit said, Paul I know, and Jesus I know, but who are you? And then he overpowered them and beat them so severely that they left the house wounded and naked. These Jewish exorcist had no idea what they were doing. They were blaspheming a power over which they were completely ignorant. This is a popular thing in our day. To talk like you know a lot about the spirit world and to claim to know the ways of demons and how to defeat them. From the Frank Peretti books to the New Apostolic Reformation movement which is claiming knowledge about the spirit world and how professing Christians can have victory over demons. In fact the NAR says that there are territorial demons and spirits who have control over certain cities and towns and regions. And the Gospel cannot, according to the NAR apostles, advance in that area until the territorial spirit is cast out through strategic spiritual warfare like spiritual mapping, and prayer walks, and fasting, and warfare prayer, and massive prayer vigils, and pouring anointing oil on specific spots, and even blowing shofars and proclaiming that the demons are bound in Jesus’ name. God is unable to work in that region, according to these self-proclaimed prophets, until this demon is bound and removed.
- i. “In 2011 Cindy Jacobs and John Benefiel claimed that God had revealed that DC was being controlled by a demon named Columbia, so they organized NAR believers across America to remove Columbia’s influence. This move was known as DC40. Prayer and fasting was directed towards the removal of this perceived demonic threat . . . their efforts proved to be fruitless. Nothing improved.”<sup>1</sup>
- j. Beloved, this is but one example of these false teachers blaspheming about things that they have no idea what they are talking about. How do we know about territorial spirits? With what kind of arrogance do we presume to speak and say that if we do xyz we will see God not be hindered anymore? What kind of boldness does it take to stand up and say that God is not able to do something

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<sup>1</sup> <http://youthapologeticstraining.com/strategic-level-spiritual-warfare/>

with His Gospel and we know the reason, and that reason is rooted in our own imaginations? This is high-level arrogance here. The worst of the world.

- k. And Peter's point is, that is what is permeating in the false teachers of any age. This arrogance is coursing through their veins. And they become like irrational animals. Unable to actually think through something but now just going off of their instincts and they are ripe for the condemnation of the Lord. Like animals who just follow their instincts and therefore are made for the trap or the lure and the certain death it brings, so too these false teachers have put aside their rational capacities are so instinct driven that they are running headlong to destruction.

## II. False Teachers are Lust Led – vs. 13-16

- a. So, they are pride permeated. We also see from this text that these false teachers are lust led. So, imagine that you're in that doctor's office still and he has told you about the size of the cancerous tumor and how deadly that is to your body, but now he begins to describe how those cancer cells are toxic to the rest of your body. It is a double edged sword – it cuts on both sides. It has two toxic realities. That is true of these false teachers. They are not just pride permeated, but they are also lust led.
- b. So, in the middle of verse 13 the Holy Spirit, who has no ignorance on these matters by the way, says that these false teachers count it pleasure to revel in the daytime. In other words, they have considered their options about this – they have counted it – and they have determined that it is pleasurable to them to revel in the daytime. This could mean that they are so brazen in their lust fueled activities that they partake in wild parties even during the day. They can't even wait until the fall of darkness in the evening before they pursue their shameful deeds of the flesh. Or, it could mean that they are in the daytime of God's truth and revelation in the midst of Christ's church – and even here, in the midst of the light they are reveling and carousing. They are grieving the Spirit of God by walking in the flesh in the very midst of the church of God. The text goes on to say that they are blots and blemishes because they revel in their deceptions while they feast with the church. This could be speaking of activity that is happening when the Church gathers for their agape meals where they remember the sacrifice of the Lord at the Lord's Table. So, this could be a church in Corinth situation where some are coming to the Lord's Table and are feasting and getting drunk and others are pursuing illicit relationships. In other words, they have turned the Lord's Table into the carousing table of the world. The people of God are blameless and spotless in Christ, as Peter will say in chapter 3, but these false teachers are blots and blemishes upon her reputation. The word for pleasure is the word out of which we get the word hedonism. It is the pursuit of pleasure for the individual in all things. It is the luxurious self-indulgence which feeds the animal instincts of their flesh. They love this, and they are all about it. They pursue it even in the brightest of moments.

- c. Peter also describes them as having eyes full of adultery. This means that their eyes are filled to the brim and are overflowing with immoral pursuit. They are ever on the lookout for an adulterous woman. They look at every woman and size her up to see if she is a good possibility for their immoral plans. And notice that these plans fan this flame of their lustful eyes. And the images of their eyes feed the flame of their lustful plans. It's a cyclical deal. Their plans and their eyes are the two rails guiding their train down the tracks of adulterous promiscuity.
- d. And then the text says that their eyes are also insatiable for sin. In other words, they can never get enough. They are never satisfied with one sinful experience, so they are hankering for the next one. This is how sin works by the way. It is a dreadful master. It never leaves you alone. Just when you bring it its supper then it wants its dessert and then its dishes done and then the floors washed and waxed. Just like Cinderella's cruel step-mother, so sin is never happy and never gives us a break. The heart of the false teacher is dominated by such sin. They are always on the lookout for another opportunity to indulge in the flesh.
- e. Not only that, but they are also enticing unsteady souls it says in verse 14. This enticing is what fisherman do in baiting their hook. This is what the hunter does when he sits in a blind and blows in an animal call to lure the prey closer just so that it can be killed. These false teachers are using false words to dress the hook with what appears to be an appealing meal. But when you take the bait you quickly learn that it was concealing a deadly hook.
- f. They don't look to entice the strong and the knowledgeable and the steady and firm. Rather, they target the weakest links. These unsteady souls are unsure of the Scriptures and they are always changing their views and their beliefs. They are the ones in 3:16 whom Peter will describe as twisting Scripture for their own purposes. In other words, they are unstable and unsteady because they don't simply receive God's Word by faith that it is indeed God's Word. Rather they are always looking to take Scripture and twist it to suit their fancy rather than to submit to Scripture to demand their obedience. They have itching ears and are unsteady souls.
- g. And they also have hearts trained in greed. Boy oh boy, Dr. Peter, can the diagnosis get any worse? Oh yes, Peter says. They are so sinful and lust led that their hearts are gym rats at the YMCA of greedville. The word for trained in the word out of which we get gymnasium. These false teachers are so routinely giving their hearts over to greed and all that it demands that their muscles of greed look good in the tank top of lust – they are buff! They know how to want what they want and they know how to find a way to make that happen. They are greed Olympians!
- h. So, they count it a pleasure to revel in darkness right in the broad daylight of the truth. And they have eyes full of adultery, always looking for their next immoral escapade. And they are insatiable for sin – never satisfied, always wanting more.

And they lure unsteady souls as they twist Scripture to give people what they want to hear instead of what God has said. And they have hearts expertly trained in greed. These are wicked people. And they are lured to a forsaking of the right way in verse 15. They have gone astray, after the way of Balaam, and this is not a compliment!

- i. They are so bent on their own lusts that they have forsaken the right way, or the straight way. This is the narrow and straight way that Jesus describes which will lead to eternal life. But broad is the road and easy is the way that leads to destruction, there are many who go that way, including these false teachers in the church. They have decided that the way of Balaam is the better route than the way of Christ – and no wonder really, because they have already denied the Lord who bought them. They are willing to profess allegiance while prohibiting His authority over them. They would rather be like the prophet Balaam from Numbers 22. Balaam was a false prophet who was in it for the money. He is the epitome of being led by his lusts. You remember some of those details of that account in Numbers 22, but the children of Israel were nearing the end of their 40 years of wandering in the wilderness and the King of Moab was afraid of them and knew that he could not defeat them just on his own. He had heard the stories of this people's departure from Egypt and he saw how many of them there were and he knew that if they just went to battle with them they didn't stand a chance. And so he sought out Balaam who was some kind of prophet of God – or at least he was someone who sold himself as a prophet of God. So, the king sent an entourage to Balaam with and promised him all kinds of money and honor if he would come and curse the Israelites. So, Balaam sought after the Lord – and we know from Deuteronomy 23:4-5 that Balaam was asking the Lord to give him a curse for the children of Israel. But the Lord loved the nation of Israel with a covenantal love and wasn't about to utter a curse through the mouth of a prophet for hire. So he refused. So Balaam told the princes who came for him that he couldn't go with them because the Lord wouldn't give him a curse for the Israelites. And so they left, but like flies to the picnic table, they were soon back with promises of more money and more honor. At that point Balaam sought the Lord again asking for a curse for the children of Israel – and this greatly angered the Lord. And so the Lord told Balaam he could go, but that he could only say what God gave him to say. And you know the rest of the story. When Balaam is standing with the king overlooking the Israelites he stands to pronounce a curse, but God filled his mouth with blessing for the children of Israel. What Balaam and the king of Moab meant for evil, God made it into good.
- j. But you remember, that along the way, when Balaam was riding his donkey to meet up with the king that the angel of the Yahweh appeared at strategic points along the road. The donkey saw him, but Balaam didn't. And the donkey eventually laid down underneath Balaam and refused to get up and go forward

because going forward would have meant death for Balaam. And Balaam speaks to the donkey and the donkey answers. Peter uses a word for spoke here which means a loud and clear voice. In other words, there was no doubt that it was the donkey speaking. And the donkey spoke telling Balaam that he had ridden her his whole life and had she ever done anything like this before. Balaam replied with a simple “no” and then God opened his eyes to see the angel of Yahweh standing in the narrow path. The speechless donkey spoke and restrained the prophet’s madness. He was so driven by his lust for money and the pleasures of the flesh that he didn’t care what God said or wanted. Balaam wanted his way and was going to get it no matter the cost, even his own life. Until the donkey stepped in, or should I say, until the donkey sat down and then spoke up.

- k. In other words, the choices were so obvious that even a speechless and irrational donkey could see it clearly. But Balaam was so driven by the financial gain he would get from wrongdoing that he was no longer thinking clearly. And so Balaam becomes the byword in the Scriptures for those who use the sham of speaking for God only for their own gain. They love the gain they can get from leaving the straight and narrow so much that they become like irrational beasts who are destined to destruction.

### III. **False Teachers are Destruction Destined – vs. 12b-13a**

- a. And that is Peter’s point in this section of chapter 2. As he exposes the character and nature of these false prophets he does so to let us know that they will ultimately be destroyed. They are pride permeated and lust led, and this makes them destruction destined. Back in the Dr.’s office – and the conversation has turned from describing the size of the cancerous tumor and how it infects the body with its cancerous cells to now the prognosis. These false prophets are infected with the cancer of pride and lust. They think more highly of themselves than anyone else, including God. And they are willing to do whatever it takes to get what they want. And this is not going to end well for them. They are destruction destined.
- b. The main verb of this whole section of verses is actually found at the end of verse 12. Peter says they will also be destroyed in their destruction, suffering wrong as the wage for their wrongdoing. Peter is using a play on words to show their ultimate end. All of their destructive and deceptive ways in the Church will ultimately not destroy the church but will actually destroy them. This is the heart of Peter’s point. He wants the church to know that like Balaam, these false teachers will eventually fall into their own hole. They are seeking to curse the church but God will not let this go unpunished or unchecked. Like Haman, they will eventually hang on their own gallows. Like Judas their blood money will end up on the ground and their neck in the noose of god’s justice. Like Jezebel, that wicked opponent of God, they will end up being eaten by the dogs. These false teachers are destined for the judgment of the Lord. This is always the reward for

pride filled and lust driven lives. There is pleasure for a season. The flesh is immediately pleased, but then it hungers for more. This temporary pleasure will one day give way to eternal destruction in the fires of Hell.

- c. These false teachers are accursed children! This is a Hebraism that Peter uses here to communicate that they are children of that which dominates them. They think they are dominated by themselves. That they answer to know one. That they are their own boss and set their own destiny, captains of their own fate. That they are free to fulfill the lusts of their flesh and to thrive in the pride of life. But they are children of the curse. They are dominated by the outcome of their sinfulness because they have denied the merciful grace of our loving Lord.

**Conclusion:** So, let this text instruct your own heart here. See these con artists for what they are. Not everyone who names the name of Christ and claims to speak for Him actually does. Not everyone who is popular is worthy of your time or your ear. In fact, in these latter days there will be many false prophets who will arise. And they will be marked by a permeating pride and by a Balaam-esque penchant for the lusts of the flesh, willing to do all kinds of wrong because it will lead to gain. So you must flee far from these false prophets. Like Lot's wife turned into a pillar of salt, let their destruction increase your resolve to not look back and long for the ways of Sodom. Run past these salt piles with increased zeal as you kill the pride and lust in your own heart. Not because you are seeking to earn your salvation, but because you have been bought by the precious blood of Christ. Give these false teachers no time and no listening ear. They will be destroyed in their destruction, and you do not want to join them there. Let's pray!