

2 Peter 2:1-4

Characteristics of False Teachers

Jeremy Doan

Holly Hills Bible Church

25 October 2015

Not all that glitters

1 But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.

- *But* – a gentle¹ transition from previous topic
 - ▶ 1:19 – *So we have the prophetic word made more sure*
 - ★ Because they were eyewitnesses of Christ's majesty
 - ▶ 1:20 – *no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of ones own interpretation*
 - ★ To be contrasted with the false prophets and teachers
 - ▶ 1:21 – *no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will*
- *false prophets also arose among the people*
 - ▶ See Balaam in 2:15-16
 - ▶ This is different than false teaching
 - ★ These false prophets seem to be intentionally misleading
 - ★ Matt.7:15 – wolves in sheep's clothing

¹not the harsh *alla*

The (not quite) real thing

1 But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.

- *there will also be false teachers among you*
 - ▶ Notice the certainty with which this is stated
 - ▶ Notice that they will be *among us*²
 - ▶ There is also an intentionality in their teaching
 - ★ Acts 20:30 – ...to draw away the disciples after them
 - ★ 2:14 – ...having a heart trained in greed
- *who will secretly introduce destructive heresies*
 - ▶ the goal here is to deceive
 - ▶ v.14 – *enticing unsteady souls*³
 - ▶ v.18 – *they entice by fleshly desires*

²no threat from without can be as destructive as the threats from within

³*entice* is the word used in James 1:14

Heresies!

- What is a heresy?
 - ▶ Generally:
 - ★ The word “heresy” refers to any doctrine that contradicts the teaching of Scripture⁴
 - ★ A heresy is a teaching that deviates from the truth of Biblical revelation. It is a false teaching.⁵
 - ▶ *heresy* here can also be translated *sects* or *factions*
 - ★ 1 Cor. 11:19 – *For there must also be factions among you...*
- How do we recognize a heresy?
 - ▶ 1 John 4:1-3 – does it acknowledge the deity of Christ?⁶
 - ▶ Galatians 1:8-9 – compare to the Scriptures⁷
 - ★ 2 Peter 1:16-21 established the authority of the Apostles’ words
- Are we to be more aware of the heresy, or the heretic?
 - ▶ This passage is pretty clear about the heretics

⁴<http://www.esvbible.org/resources/esv-global-study-bible/facts-2-peter-2/>

⁵<https://carm.org/questions-heresy>

⁶this one will come up in a moment

⁷Just as the Bereans in Acts 17:11 did

Denial


*1 But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, **even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.***

- *even denying the Master who bought them*
 - ▶ Jude 1:4 – *For certain persons have crept in unnoticed...who...deny our only **Master and Lord, Jesus Christ***
 - ★ The people Jude speaks of came in from the outside
 - ▶ Are the false teachers believers?
 - ★ 1 Cor. 6:20 – *you have been bought with a price...*
 - ★ v.15 – *forsaking the right way, they have gone astray*
 - ★ See vs.20-21
- *bringing swift destruction upon themselves*
 - ▶ Their destruction/punishment is mentioned in vs. 3, 12, 17

The following

2 Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned;

- *Many will follow their sensuality*⁸
 - ▶ Follow = imitate, so it's not just the words
 - ▶ *sensuality* – wantonness, lustfulness, excessive pleasure
 - ★ Descriptions of their sensuality in vs. 10, 13, 14, 18
 - ★ Key: they are not seeking “things above”
- *because of them the way of the truth will be maligned*
 - ▶ *the way of the truth* – a.k.a. the Gospel, the faith
 - ★ John 14:6 – *I am the way, the truth, and the life*
 - ▶ *will be maligned* – blasphemed or reviled
 - ★ Blasphemy was a capital offense in 1st century Judea
 - ★ More references to their blasphemy in vs. 11, 12,

⁸Side note: number of followers doesn't actually mean much 

“Greed is [not] good”

3 and in their greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.

- *in their greed*

- ▶ NT frequently warns against greed – Rom. 1:29; Eph. 5:3; Col. 3:5
- ▶ Teachers/preachers are explicitly warned against it
 - ★ 1 Peter 5:2 – *not for sordid gain*⁹
- ▶ Paul demonstrated his lack of greed – 1 Th. 2:5
- ▶ v.15 – *Balaam...loved gain from wrongdoing*

- *they will exploit you* – to traffic in, to make gain of¹⁰

- ▶ They look at people just as a business venture¹¹
- ▶ Greed → exploitation

- *false words*

- ▶ Lit. molded words, or plastic logic (greek is *plastos logos*)
- ▶ Colossians 2:4 – *...delude you with persuasive argument*

⁹see also Titus 1:10-11

¹⁰Zodhiates

¹¹term is actually a business term – see James 4:13

(Not) Getting away with it

*3 and in their greed they will exploit you with false words;
their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their
destruction is not asleep.*

- *their judgment from long ago is not idle*¹²
 - ▶ *judgment* – sentence, punishment, consequences of judging
 - ▶ *from long ago* – not the same as “from the beginning”¹³
 - ★ 3:5 – ...*the heavens existed long ago*...
 - ▶ *idle* – inactive
- *their destruction is not asleep*
 - ▶ *destruction* – same word as in 2:1
 - ▶ *asleep* – slumbering, and, thus, not working

¹²We'll see a similar theme in chapter 3

¹³as in John 6:64

4 For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment;

- If – then

- ▶ vs.4-8 are “if” statements

- ★ v.4 – *if God did not spare angels*

- ★ v.5 – *[if God] did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah*

- ★ v.6 – *f He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah*

- ★ v.7 – *if He rescued righteous¹⁴ Lot*

- ▶ v.9 – *then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment,*

- ★ God punishes the sinful, but protects the righteous

- ★ i.e. God knows how to be just, and to execute justice

¹⁴really? “righteous” Lot

Can you spare an angel?

4 For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment;

- *angels when they sinned*
 - ▶ Jude 6a – *And angels who did not keep their own domain...*
 - ▶ v.11 – *whereas angels...do not bring a reviling judgment against them*
- *cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness*
 - ▶ *hell* – Tartarus, the Greek underworld
 - ★ Place was even below Hades¹⁵
 - ★ Reserved for the lowest creatures
 - ▶ *pits of darkness*
 - ★ Jude 6c – *...kept in eternal bonds under darkness...*
- *reserved for judgment*
 - ▶ Passage consistently states false teachers will be punished¹⁶

¹⁵greekmythology.com

¹⁶eventually