

THE WAY OF THE FALSE TEACHER

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In the apostle Peter's second epistle, chapter two, he does not mince words in his denunciation and description of the false teachers/false prophets of his day. **"But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption"** (2 Pet. 2:12).

Whether it was the "Judaizers" who were trying to bind the Law of Moses on the Christians (Acts 15:1) or the "proto-Gnostics" who were beginning to deny that Jesus had a physical body (2 John 7), Peter and the Holy Spirit are reminding us of the destructive way taken by those who depart from New Testament Christianity.

Like a modern-day microscope, the Bible reveals to us the way of depravity of the false teacher. And the word of God is as revealing today concerning false teachers as it was 2,000 year ago. **"Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do"** (Heb. 4:13).

The Way Of The False Teacher Is The Way Of The Irrational

God sees false teachers as they truly are, **"as natural brute beasts"** (v. 12). He sees them as irrational creatures that **"speak evil of the things that they understand not"**. Christianity is a rational, objective religion of absolute truth. **"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good"** (1 The. 5:21). False doctrine is basically irrational. For example, the falsity of "faith-only" salvation is readily apparent to the honest reader of the Bible. **"Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only"** (Jam. 2:24).

The Way Of The False Teacher Is The Way Of A Spiritual Bum

The false teacher is basically a sensualist who seeks to live in luxury at the expense of others (v. 13). For example, many so-called "televangelists" are just professional beggars who either live off "love offerings" of the naive or seek to peddle their books at Wal-Mart to gullible buyers. Behind their masks of piety are lust and covetousness.

False teachers have **"a heart trained in covetous practices"** (Verse 14, NKJ). In fact, their downfall is often either financial or sexually immoral in nature.

These spiritual bums live off other's weaknesses. **"For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts"** (2 Tim. 3:6). The dividend or **"reward of unrighteousness"** (v. 13) of the false teacher will be eternal damnation.

The Way Of The False Teacher Is To Forsake The Right Way

"Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray..." (v. 15). The **"right way"** Peter mentions is the "living way" (Heb. 10:20) or **"the way"** (John 14:6) of Jesus Christ—the teachings of New Testament Christianity.

In this life there is a spiritual choice to be made.

Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it (Mat. 7:13-14).

That **“strait gate”** is salvation through Jesus Christ. The **“wide gate”** leads away from God toward Hell. False teachers opt for the wrong way by forsaking the right way. That wrong way is also the **“way of Balaam”** (v. 15). Like Balaam, the false teacher forsakes God’s Word for money. Even though rebuked by the Angel of the Lord for his lawlessness, Balaam followed money rather than the Word of God (cf. Num. 22:32; 1 Tim. 6:10). Likewise, modern false teachers forsake the right way by not teaching the necessity of baptism for remission of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38) to make themselves acceptable to the denominational world. Compromising the Truth of the Gospel also sells more books and merchandise. Peter describes such a departure as **“madness”** (v. 16).

The Way Of The False Teacher Is One Of Empty, Inflated Rhetoric

False teachers are **“wells without water”** (v. 17) who **“speak great swelling words of vanity”** (v. 18). Their false doctrines make them spiritual wells of lies and deceit. Their teachings are Satan’s bait to lure an unwary soul into his trap. They often mask their treachery in flowery language and emotional appeals. **“For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple”** (Rom. 16:18).

Contrast this with the **“living water”** (John 4:10) of Jesus Christ, the Gospel, which is simple and easily understood. Those who truly proclaim it have no hidden agenda of covetousness. **“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ”** (Col. 2:8).

The Way Of The False Teacher Is The Way Of Slavery

To those trying to escape sin, the false teacher promises **“liberty”** (v. 19) or a supposed license to sin. Whenever we devalue the necessity of living a morally upright life, we pervert the Gospel. **“For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another”** (Gal. 5:13).

Today, some false teachers preach a “grace-only” salvation that says that there is nothing we can do to gain salvation, thereby excluding obedience to God. This is merely “cheap grace”. True liberty is the freedom to do God’s will—not serve our own selfishness. **“But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life”** (Rom. 6:22).

The Way Of The False Teacher Is The Way Of Regression

Peter pictures the false teacher as someone who has left **“the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ”** (v. 20) and **“turned from the holy commandment delivered unto them”** (v. 21). In other words, they know the Truth of the Gospel but have regressed to false doctrine. False doctrine takes a soul backward, not forward to Heaven.

Look to yourselves, that ye lose not the things which we have wrought, but that ye receive a full reward. Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God; he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath the Father and the Son (2 John 8-9, ASV–1901).

The false teacher goes beyond what the Scriptures teach.

Peter sums up God’s revulsion for false teachers and their pernicious doctrines in a proverb. **“The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire”** (v. 22). This is the only time in the New Testament we find the words “vomit,” “sow”

and “mire.” God does not want us to have anything to do with false teachers and we should try to get others involved with them out of their grasp. Souls are at stake.

Does the church you attend preach and practice the doctrines found in the New Testament? If not, you are being fed false doctrine and are in fellowship with false teachers (Eph. 5:11). Flee that situation as if your life was in danger (because your eternal life is) and find the church of the New Testament—the church that Jesus built. **“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you”** (2 Cor. 6:17).~