

Greetings:

The study that Pastor Pat brings on Sunday mornings is a reflection of the study for that week. It represents a lot of research. Not all of what he has prepared is communicated. In an attempt to continue the learning process, he is making available his study notes to the congregation.

These notes are edited, but not “book” ready. To the critical eye, mistakes can possibly be found. Therefore, he asks that you take the material with humility, teach-ability, and charity.

Enjoy and if you should have any questions or corrections, please do not hesitate to email him at pastorpat@waukeshabible.org.

Date: September 14, 2014

Sermon Title: The Local Church and False Prophets / Teachers

Series Title: A Study of 2 Peter and Jude

Text: 2 Peter 2:1; Miscellaneous

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Waukesha Bible Church is a family of families seeking to live in **the Storyline of the Bible**. She is determined by design to have a **God-centered, Christ-exalting worship; a Word-centered teaching** focused on personal **discipleship** through intentional and systematic instruction; a **Global-impacting mission** that resolves to be a **church planting church**; and a **Grace-based fellowship** where disciples are invited to live under a **reigning grace** characterized by a **Gospel-driven sanctification** that celebrates a divine **monergism** to the Christian life.

Date: September 14, 2014
 Title: The Local Church and False Prophets / Teachers
 Text: 2 Peter 2:1; Misc.
 Theme: The devil sows tares among the wheat. His desire is to choke out the Word of God.

Introduction:

"2 Peter chapter 2 stands in great contrast to the first chapter. While chapter 1 was about that which is true, chapter 2 is about that which is false. Chapter 1 was about that which you should add to your faith, whereas chapter 2 is about that which you should avoid. In short, chapter 2 is a trip to the dark side of false teachers, exposing their motives, characteristics and their end."¹

"In contrast with the true prophets just pictured in 2Pe 1:20."²

Peter uses the word **pseudodidaskalos** to describe false teachers. He is the only one who uses this exact word in the New Testament. The New Testament uses the word for "false prophets" in eleven verses [**pseudoprophetes**]. What Peter says in our text is consistent throughout the New Testament.

As I studied in preparation to speak on 2 Peter 2, I noticed a lot of material in the New Testament concerning false prophets. Because of this, I desire to treat the idea of the false prophet from the New Testament before we dive into 2 Peter 2:1ff.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon

"Discernment is not a matter of simply telling the difference between what is right and wrong; rather, **it is the difference between right and almost right.**"

John Murray

"At the point of divergence the difference between right and wrong, between truth and falsehood, **is not a chasm but a razor's edge.**"

There are three broad ideas concerning the false prophet. First, what they have to say is very appealing and has the power of deceiving and winning over. If it were not believable, no one would believe them. Second, although it appears attractive, it is deadly, destructive, and damnable. Finally, we are to push against the false prophet. With this in mind, let us consider our first point.

- I. Falsehood comes sugar coated - How false prophets operate
 - A. False prophets are among us (Matt. 7:15; Acts 20:29; 2 Peter 2:1)

"There were false prophets in the time of the Old Testament prophets. Jesus will predict 'false Messiahs and false prophets' (Mt 24:24) who will lead many astray. They came in due time posing as angels of light like Satan, Judaizers (2Co 11:13ff.) and Gnostics (1Jo 4:1; 1Ti 4:1). Already false prophets were on hand when Jesus spoke on this occasion (cf. Ac 13:6; 2Pe 2:1). In

outward appearance they look like sheep in the sheep's clothing which they wear, but within they are 'ravening wolves' (lukoi harpages), greedy for power, gain, self. It is a tragedy that such men and women reappear through the ages and always find victims. Wolves are more dangerous than dogs and hogs."³

- Beware of the false prophets, **who come to you in sheep's clothing**, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. (Matt. 7:15)
- ²⁸ Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. ²⁹ I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; ³⁰ and **from among your own selves men will arise**, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. (Acts 20:28-30)

"In sheep's clothing just as Jesus had foretold. The outcome fully justified Paul's apprehensions as we see in Colossians, Ephesians, I and II Timothy, Revelation. False philosophy, immorality, asceticism will lead some astray (Col 2:8,18; Eph 4:14; 5:6). John will picture 'antichrists' who went out from us because they were not of us (1Jo 2:18). There is a false optimism that is complacently blind as well as a despondent pessimism that gives up the fight."⁴

- 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. (2 Pet. 2:1)

We call them "teacher and brother." False prophets look like "wheat" (Matt. 13:24-30; 2 Cor. 11:12-15).

- ²⁴ Jesus presented another parable to them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. ²⁵ But while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went away. ²⁶ But when the wheat sprouted and bore grain, then the tares became evident also. ²⁷ The slaves of the landowner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' ²⁸ And he said to them, 'An enemy has done this!' The slaves said to him, 'Do you want us, then, to go and gather them up?' ²⁹ But he said, 'No; for while you are gathering up the tares, you may uproot the wheat with them. ³⁰ Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, 'First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn.'" (Matt. 13:24-30)
- ¹² But what I am doing I will continue to do, so that I may cut off opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the matter about which they are boasting. ¹³ For such men are false apostles [**pseudapostolos**], deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. ¹⁴ No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. ¹⁵ Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds. (2 Cor. 11:12-15)

"The prince of darkness puts on the garb of light and sets the fashion for his followers in the masquerade to deceive the saints. 'Like master like man.' Cf. 2Co 2:11; Ga 1:8. This terrible portrayal reveals the depth of Paul's feelings about the conduct of the Judaizing leaders in Corinth. In Ga 2:4 he terms those in Jerusalem 'false brethren.'"⁵

Jesus (Joh 10:1-21) terms these false shepherds thieves and robbers.

B. False prophets are ever present (“will arise” Matt. 24:11; 1 John 4:1).

- Many false prophets **will arise** and will mislead many. (Matt. 24:11)
- For false Christs and false prophets **will arise** and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect. (Matt. 24:24)

“But the point to note here is that mere ‘signs and wonders’ do not of themselves prove the power of God. These charlatans will be so skilful that they will, if possible (ei dunaton), lead astray the very elect. The implication is that it is not possible. People become excited and are misled and are unable to judge of results.”⁶

- for false Christs and false prophets **will arise**, and will show signs and wonders, in order to lead astray, if possible, the elect. (Matt. 13:22)
- Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, **because many false prophets have gone out into the world.** (1 John 4:1)

“Believe not every spirit (mê panti pneumati pisteuete). ‘Stop believing,’ as some were clearly carried away by the spirits of error rampant among them, both Docetic and Cerinthian Gnostics. Credulity means gullibility and some believers fall easy victims to the latest fads in spiritualistic humbuggery. Prove the spirits (dokimazete ta pneumata). Put them to the acid test of truth as the metallurgist does his metals. If it stands the test like a coin, it is acceptable (dokimos, 2Co 10:18), otherwise it is rejected (adokimos, 1Co 9:27; 2Co 13:5-7). Many false prophets (polloi pseudoprophêtai). Jesus had warned people against them (Mt 7:15), even when they as false Christs work portents (Mt 24:11,24; Mr 13:22). It is an old story (Lu 6:26) and recurs again and again (Ac 13:6; Re 16:13; 19:20; 20:10) along with false teachers (2Pe 2:1).”⁷

C. False prophets are attractive (“signs and wonders” (Matt. 7:21-23; 24:24; Acts 20:30; 1 Tim. 4:1)

- For false Christs and false prophets will arise and **will show great signs and wonders**, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect. (Matt. 24:24)
- for false Christs and false prophets **will arise**, and will show signs and wonders, in order to lead astray, if possible, the elect. (Mark 13:22)
- ²⁸ Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. ²⁹ I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; ³⁰ and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, **to draw away the disciples after them.** (Acts 20:28-30)
- But the Spirit explicitly says that **in later times some will fall away from the faith**, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, (1 Tim. 4:1)

False prophets are confusing and misleading (Matt. 24:24; Mark 13:22; Acts 20:30, ‘draw away;’ 1 Tim. 4:1 ‘some will fall away;’).

D. False prophets arrive underhandedly (Gal. 2:4, 'secretly brought in;' 2 Peter 2:1; Jude 4).

- ³ But not even Titus, who was with me, though he was a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised. ⁴ **But it was because of the false brethren secretly brought in, who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to bring us into bondage.** ⁵ But we did not yield in subjection to them for even an hour, so that the truth of the gospel would remain with you. (Gal. 2:3-5)

"Evidently some of the Judaizers or sympathizers whom Paul had not invited had come in as often happens. Paul terms them 'false brethren' like 'the false apostles' in 2Co 11:13 of the Judaizers in Corinth. Who came in privily (hoitines pareisêlthon). Repetition of the charge of their slipping in unwanted (pareiserchomai, late double compound, in Plutarch, in N.T. only here and Ro 5:20). To spy out (kataskopêsai). First aorist active infinitive of kataskopeô, old Greek verb from kataskopos, a spy, to reconnoitre, to make a treacherous investigation. That they might bring us into bondage (hina hêmas katadoulôsousin). Future active indicative of this old compound, to enslave completely (kata-) as in 2Co 11:20. Nowhere else in N.T. This was their purpose (hina and future active indicative of this causative verb). It was as serious a conflict as this. Spiritual liberty or spiritual bondage, which?"⁸

- 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. (2 Pet. 2:1)

"Secretly" occurs only here in the New Testament.

- **For certain persons have crept in unnoticed**, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. (Jude 4)

Unnoticed occurs only here in the New Testament. Speaks of "to settle in alongside, i.e. lodge stealthily:--creep in unawares." They are intentional and unashamed.

E. False prophets are destructive (Acts 20:29)

- ²⁸ Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. ²⁹ I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, **not sparing the flock;** ³⁰ and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. (Acts 20:28-30)

II. Falsehood contains toxins - How we identify them

A. They speak perverse things (Acts 20:30)

- ²⁸ Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. ²⁹ I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, **not sparing the flock;** ³⁰ and from among your own selves men will arise, **speaking perverse things** [corrupt, distorted], to draw away the disciples after them. (Acts 20:28-30)

B. They abandon the local church and her authority (Acts 20:30; 1 John 2:18, 19)

- ²⁸ Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. ²⁹ I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; ³⁰ **and from among your own selves men will arise**, speaking perverse things, **to draw away the disciples after them.** (Acts 20:28-30)
- ¹⁸ Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour. ¹⁹ **They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us.** (1 John 2:18, 19)

C. They can be highly disciplined (1 Tim. 4:3) or grossly debased (2 Peter 2).

- ¹ But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, ² by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron, ³ **men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods which God has created** to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth. ⁴ For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude; ⁵ for it is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer. (1 Tim. 4:1-4)

D. They bring in bondage (Gal. 2:4; 2 Peter 2:19, 20).

- ³ But not even Titus, who was with me, though he was a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised. ⁴ **But it was because of the false brethren secretly brought in, who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to bring us into bondage.** ⁵ But we did not yield in subjection to them for even an hour, so that the truth of the gospel would remain with you. (Gal. 2:3-5)

Pseudadelphos is used only twice in the New Testament (here and 2 Cor. 11:26).

- ¹⁹ promising them freedom while they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by what a man is overcome, by this **he is enslaved.** ²⁰ For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. (2 Pet. 2:19, 20)

E. They turn the grace of God into moral debauchery (Jude 4).

- ³ Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints. ⁴ **For certain persons have crept in unnoticed**, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons **who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.** (Jude 3, 4)

Jude's intent was to write about their common salvation, but because of the pressing need contended for the faith.

F. They deny the incarnation and deity of Jesus Christ (1 John 2:22; 4:3; 2 John 7).

- Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son. (1 John 2:22)
- and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world. (1 John 4:3)
- For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist. (2 John 1:7)

III. Falsehood must be countered - What we are to do

A. Beware of the false prophet (Matt. 7:15; Acts 20:28; 2 Tim. 4:14, 15).

- **Beware of the false prophets**, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. (Matt. 7:15)
- ²⁸ **Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock**, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. ²⁹ I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; ³⁰ and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. (Acts 20:28-30)

B. Test the spirits (1 John 4:1).

- Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but **test the spirits** to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. (1 John 4:1)

C. Reject the factious (Titus 3:9-11).

- ⁹ But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and strife and disputes about the Law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. ¹⁰ **Reject a factious man after a first and second warning**, ¹¹ knowing that such a man is perverted and is sinning, being self-condemned. (Titus 3:9-11)
- Among these are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan, so that they will be taught not to blaspheme. (1 Tim. 1:20)
- Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds. (2 Tim. 4:14)
- I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. (1 Cor. 5:5)

Shepherding the Sheep (What is the NEXT STEP)

1. Learn to know the truth.
2. Learn to reject the error.
3. Be a part of the local church for the promotion of the truth and its defense.

¹ <http://www.jesusplusnothing.com/studies/online/2pet219.htm>

² A.T. Robertson's *NT Word Pictures* on 2 Peter 2:1.

³ A.T. Robertson's *NT Word Pictures* on Matthew 7:15.

⁴ A.T. Robertson's *NT Word Pictures* on Acts 20:30.

⁵ A.T. Robertson's *NT Word Pictures* on 2 Corinthians 11:14.

⁶ A.T. Robertson's *NT Word Pictures* on Matthew 24:24.

⁷ A.T. Robertson's *NT Word Pictures* on 1 John 4:1.

⁸ A.T. Robertson's *NT Word Pictures* on Galatians 2:4.