

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](mailto:pastorpat@waukeshabible.org).

**Date:** September 21 2014

**Sermon Title:** There Are False Prophets

**Series Title:** A Study of 2 Peter and Jude

**Text:** 2 Peter 2:1-22

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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 21, 2014  
 Title: There are False Prophets  
 Text: 2 Peter 2:1-22  
 Theme: The devil seeks to destroy the church by leading her into denial.

### Introduction:

"A very popular and family friendly movie 'Pollyanna' portrayed a preacher who is harsh and judgmental. Sunday after Sunday, he preached 'hell fire and brimstone' messages, virtually scorching his audience with the wrath of God. Pollyanna finally came to his rescue by telling the preacher about her father who was also a preacher. Her father avoided the negative texts and instead preached the 'happy texts,' those texts with words which seem to offer encouragement and comfort and leave one feeling good after hearing them. 'Happy texts' can only be happy for those to whom they apply. Likewise, 'unhappy texts' are those that desperately need to be heard and heeded by those who are in danger. The good news is that the 'unhappy texts' warn men about destruction so that they will receive God's salvation, which alone makes men truly 'happy'."<sup>1</sup>

"But there were" and "Even as there shall be." He will use what we know about the Old Testament past to prove his point in the New Testament present. There are many damnable heresies. One in particular is denying God's redemptive purposes. The consequence of this denial is swift damnation.

"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."<sup>2</sup>

"In contrast with the true prophets just pictured in 2Pe 1:20."<sup>3</sup>

The New Testament uses the word for "false prophets" in eleven verses. What Peter says in our text is consistent throughout the New Testament. We have studied the theme of the false prophet throughout the New Testament. We noted three things. **First**, falsehood comes sugar-coated. Here we see how false prophets operate. False prophets are among us (Matt. 7:15; Acts 20:29; 2 Peter 2:1). False prophets are ever present ("will arise" Matt. 24:11; 1 John 4:1). False prophets are attractive ("signs and wonders" (Matt. 7:21-23; 24:24; Acts 20:30; 1 Tim. 4:1). False prophets arrive underhandedly (Gal. 2:4, 'secretly brought in;' 2 Peter 2:1; Jude 4). False prophets are destructive (Acts 20:29). **Secondly**, we noted how falsehood contains toxins. They can be identified by their perverse speech (Acts 20:30). They abandon the local church and her authority (Acts 20:30; 1 John 2:18, 19). They can be highly disciplined (1 Tim. 4:3) or grossly debased (2 Peter 2). They bring in bondage (Gal. 2:4; 2 Peter 2:19, 20). They turn the grace of God into moral debauchery (Jude 4). They deny the incarnation and deity of Jesus Christ (1 John 2:22; 4:3; 2 John 7). **Finally**, we can note how falsehood must be countered. The Bible tells us what our relationship is to falsehood. Beware of the false prophet (Matt. 7:15; Acts 20:28; 2 Tim. 4:14, 15). Test the spirits (1 John 4:1). Moreover, we are to reject the factious (Titus 3:9-11).

The contrast with chapter 1 is just as there are true prophets, so also are there false prophets.

### **THE BIG PICTURE:**

“In the second chapter of this letter Peter has given us a graphic description of the sexual licentiousness, the love of money, and the rejection of authority by which the false teachers were denying the Master who bought them, Jesus Christ. He warns the churches vividly that if they are enticed out of the way of righteousness and abandon their obedience to Christ, it will be worse for them in the final judgment than if they had never known the way. It is a very sobering word for people who sit under gospel preaching but refuse to give themselves wholly to the Savior.”<sup>4</sup>

### **The Storyline:**

The false prophet is of the serpent’s seed. The assault against the woman’s seed is an ancient battle. It began in the beginning and continues to this day. Because of this, we must stay alert. Our text describes for us the offspring of the serpent, his emissaries. The devil has missionaries who push and pull and plant falsehood.

### **Outline:**

Although our present study builds off our topical study from the whole of the New Testament and because of this a handful of points will be redundant, we will treat the text in its context. There are eight points we can make concerning the false prophet, false teacher.

- I. There are false prophets (v. 1).

The point is short, but there is falsehood in our world and such falsehood must be marked and avoided. Our desire in our study is not so much to examine the error, but to know the truth so thoroughly that we can note and avoid the falsehood.

- II. The threat of falsehood is from within the church (“among the people,” “among you” [v. 1a])

There is an intentional contrast between 2 Peter 1:16-21 and 2:1. There is a true voice from God. We have the Bible in our possessions. This is why a study like HOW TO READ THE BIBLE WELL in GLORIA is important. There are also false voices claiming to be from God but are of the devil.

*“There will be false teachers among you. Peter uses the same verb, γίνομαι (ginomai), in 2 Pet 2:1 as he had used in 1:20 to describe the process of inspiration. He may well be contrasting, by way of a catchword, the two kinds of prophets.”<sup>5</sup>*

“By the use of the future tense (*will infiltrate*), Peter is boldly prophesying the role that false teachers will have before these Gentile believers. It was necessary for him to establish both his own credentials and to anchor his audience’s faith in the written Word before he could get to this point, for these false teachers will question both.”<sup>6</sup>

“The first obvious point from this verse is that the problem of false teachers is not a new one. The enemy of God has been around from the beginning continually sowing his tares among the wheat. Because it is an old problem, we often need old advice, and right from the early days of Israel becoming a nation, God gave His people commands on how to spot and deal with the false prophets that were sure to rise among them.”<sup>7</sup>

“Even during the time that God’s holy prophets were transmitting the Old Testament Scriptures, Satan had sent false prophets among the people, to deceive and confuse them (e.g., Deuteronomy 18:20-22; 13:1-5). The same proved true in New Testament times, as false prophets arose to counteract the teachings of those with God’s true gift of prophecy (e.g., Matthew 7:15; Acts 13:6; II Corinthians 11:13).”<sup>8</sup>

The final point we should note from this first verse in second Peter 2 is that the problem is not without, but within.

Beware of false prophets who come disguised as harmless sheep, but are really wolves that will tear you apart. You can detect them by the way they act, just as you can identify a tree by its fruit. You don’t pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles. A healthy tree produces good fruit, and an unhealthy tree produces bad fruit. A good tree can’t produce bad fruit, and a bad tree can’t produce good fruit. So every tree that does not produce good fruit is chopped down and thrown into the fire. Yes, the way to identify a tree or a person is by the kind of fruit that is produced. (Matt. 7:13-20)

“The *καί* (*kai*) is ascensive, suggesting that the worst heresy is mentioned in the words that follow.”<sup>9</sup>

### III. The threat of falsehood is deceptive (“who will secretly introduce” [v. 1b])

I am making a distinction between deceptive and seductive. Deceptive is the idea of coming in sheep’s clothing or wearing masks in order to blend in with one’s surroundings. Seductive speaks of intent. They come in with stealth in order to pull us away from the truth.

The messengers of Satan are able to transform themselves into angels of light.

One of my favorite John Murray sayings is “the difference between truth and error is not a chasm but a razor’s edge.” Spurgeon said something like it too: “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.”<sup>10</sup>

IV. The threat of falsehood is theological (“they deny the Master who bought them” (v. 1c).

Error always has as its source a faulty view of theology. Failure to affirm, appreciate, and appropriate the person and work of Jesus Christ leads to error. This is a great verse for theological discussion. I believe this text teaches us that the Son’s provision is sufficient to save everyone, but effectual only in the life of those who believe. There is little doubt in my mind that God saves those who believe. There is little doubt in my mind that the believing are the elect of God. There is little doubt in my mind that Jesus died to save the elect of God. In addition, there is little doubt in my mind that who Jesus is and what Jesus did/does has the capability of saving everyone, everywhere, at all times. Because this is true, Peter can say that even the false prophet and false teacher deny the Master who bought them. The word for “bought” is the word used elsewhere for “redeem.” Paul uses this word to speak of the redeeming of God’s people by the life and death of Jesus.

- For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's. (1 Cor. 6:20)
- Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men. (1 Cor. 7:23)
- Christ hath **redeemed** us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: (Gal. 3:13)
- To **redeem** them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. (Gal. 4:5)

John will use the word again in Revelation 5:9 and 14:3, 4.

- And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; (Rev. 5:9)
- <sup>3</sup> And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were **redeemed** from the earth. <sup>4</sup> These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were **redeemed** from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. (Rev. 14:3, 4)

The death Jesus died redeems sinners from sin’s debt. That death is not efficient or powerful unless and until you believe. The false prophet, false teacher rejects the person and work of Jesus Christ. Because of this rejection, they are damned.

The threat of falsehood leads to denial (v. 1c). This is the warning found throughout the New Testament. We must be careful because the slide from believing to not believing is by small increments.

In my seminary training a common proverb was, “**What a teacher doubts, a student will deny.**” There was a second proverb, “**What you tolerate, you teach.**” Both of these statements are sobering.

It is the same word used to describe Peter's denial (Matt. 26:70, 72). John uses the word in his Letter to describe those who deny Jesus is the Christ (1 John 2:22, 23).

- <sup>22</sup> 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. <sup>23</sup> Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also. (1 John 2:22, 23)

V. The threat of falsehood is destructive and damnable (vv. 1d, 12, 13).

They have brought this destruction upon themselves.

Jesus uses this word to describe the end of those who reject Him.

- 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: {strait: or, narrow} (Matt. 7:13)
- While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is **lost**, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. (John 17:12)

Paul uses this word to describe the end of the unbelieving.

- What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to **destruction**: (Rom. 9:22)
- Whose end is **destruction**, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things. (Phil. 3:19)
- But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in **destruction** and perdition. (1 Tim. 6:9)

Peter uses the word extensively in his Letter.

- But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in **damnable** heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift **destruction**. (2 Pet. 2:1)
- And many shall follow their **pernicious** ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. (2 Pet. 2:2)
- And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their **damnation** slumbereth not. (2 Pet. 2:3)
- But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and **perdition** of ungodly men. (2 Pet. 3:7)
- As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own **destruction**. (2 Pet. 3:16)

Finally, consider John's use of this word.

- The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into **perdition**: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. (Rev. 17:8)
- And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into **perdition**. (Rev. 17:11)

A persistent denial leads to damnation.

Peter uses the word "heresy." Remember, we have used the words orthodoxy and heterodoxy. The winning side writes history. Thus, orthodoxy is the side that won. Yet, because God controls history and writes our present, He defines what is or is not true.

The word "heresy," speaks of choosing. The "heretic" is one who chooses to persist in falsehood over truth.

"Error, indeed, is never set forth in its naked deformity, lest, being thus exposed, it should at once be detected. But it is craftily decked out in on attractive dress, so as, by its outward form, to make it appear to the inexperienced (ridiculous as the expression may seem) more true than truth itself."<sup>11</sup>

"The word 'heresy' comes from the Greek *haireisis* which means 'choosing' or 'faction.' At first, the term heresy did not carry the negative meaning it does now. But, as the early church grew in its scope and influence throughout the Mediterranean area, various teachers proposed controversial ideas about Christ, God, salvation, and other biblical themes. It became necessary for the church to determine what was and was not true according to the Bible. For example, Arius of Alexandar (A.D. 320 ) taught that Jesus was a creation. Was this true? Was this important? Other errors arose. The Docetists taught that Jesus wasn't human. The Modalists denied the Trinity. The Gnostics denied the incarnation of Christ. Out of necessity, the church was forced to deal with these heresies by proclaiming orthodoxy; and in so doing, condemnation upon these heresies and the heretics became a reality."<sup>12</sup>

Let us consider the idea of heresy.

"Heresy is the rejection of established beliefs of a religious body, or adherence to 'other beliefs.' The word 'heresy' comes from the Greek word *haireisis* or choice. The Greek word is a neutral term. A number of Christian beliefs were declared heresy in the early centuries of the church. Some beliefs declared heresy (Monophysitism, Monothelitism, Nestorianism) are still maintained by Christian churches today, the largest being the Coptic Church. Additionally the Roman Catholic Council of Trent declared Protestantism heresy (a council's rulings that Protestants obviously do not accept)."<sup>13</sup>

"**Heresy** has been a concern in Christian communities at least since the writing of 2 Peter: '*even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the*

*Lord that bought them'* (2P. 2:1-AV). While in the first two or three centuries of the early Church heresy and schism were not clearly distinguished and a similar overlapping occurred in medieval scholastic thought, heresy is understood today to mean the denial of revealed truth as taught by the Church.<sup>14</sup> Schleiermacher, writing in 1821/2 defined it as 'that which preserved the *appearance* of Christianity, and yet contradicted its *essence*'".<sup>15 16</sup>

One of the problems we have as evangelicals/protestants is our inability to agree on anything even as we hold to the inspiration, inerrancy, and infallibility of the Bible. Often, we identify as heretical anything or anyone who disagrees with our position on any given topic or theme. Heresy must be as it relates to our sin and God's Son. If we get this wrong, we are simply wrong.

"While individual Protestant churches have also used the concept in proceedings against individuals and groups deemed to be heretical by those churches, the lack of a central doctrinal authority has meant that beliefs can often not be unanimously considered heretical from the Protestant perspective."<sup>17</sup>

There are things that run counter to "TRUTH." When we disagree among ourselves, this does not necessarily mean the opposing position is heretical. However, there are non-negotiable.

Falsehood is also seductive.

VI. The threat of falsehood is seductive ("many will follow," "they will exploit you" [vv. 2, 3, 10-15a, 16-19])

- <sup>3</sup> 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.
- <sup>13</sup> **They delight in deception even as they eat with you in your fellowship meals.** [NLT]
- <sup>14</sup> They commit adultery with their eyes, and their desire for sin is never satisfied. **They lure unstable people into sin, and they are well trained in greed.** They live under God's curse. [NLT]

The gospel of grace is now the gospel of greed (2:2-3). Error appeals to our covetous nature. We will be bought as merchandise by error (remember 1 Peter 1:17-19).

The word "exploit" in verse 3 has the meaning of, "To travel in (a country as a peddler), i.e. (by implication) to trade:--buy and sell, make merchandise." It occurs in James 4:13 and here. **Within the professing church, many make merchandise of the people of God. The church does not exist to get, but to give. When Christian ministry becomes big business, we are in danger of denial.**

"The next thing we should note from the verses above is that the false teachers introduce error very secretly. The problem is not just theological. It is also moral."<sup>18</sup>

Verse 15 brings in an Old Testament illustration of the current problem. The false prophets speak for wages much like Balaam. Through their false words, people follow false ways. Immoral acts mark such ways.

Peter brings in the destruction of Balaam (vv. 15, 16). See also Numbers 22.

The Word of God says one thing (1:5-7, 20, and 21) and they pursue its polar opposite. If God consistently destroys those who oppose Him, what makes you think you will escape should you oppose Him?

## VII. The threat of falsehood is shameless and enslaving (vv. 10-16)

- <sup>10</sup> and especially those who indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires and despise authority. Daring, self-willed, they do not tremble when they revile angelic majesties,
- <sup>12</sup> But these, like unreasoning animals, born as creatures of instinct to be captured and killed, reviling where they have no knowledge, will in the destruction of those creatures also be destroyed,
- <sup>13</sup> suffering wrong as the wages of doing wrong. They count it a pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are stains and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, as they carouse with you,
- <sup>14</sup> having eyes full of adultery that never cease from sin, enticing unstable souls, having a heart trained in greed, accursed children;
- <sup>15</sup> forsaking the right way, they have gone astray, having followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;

There is little reason for us to “celebrate” such expressions by their study. We have the open and very public displaying of such things running rampant in our current culture.

The message such people preach has two defining features. **First**, they reject the person and provision of Jesus Christ. They do not see what they are or do as needing redemption. **Second**, because of this, they act out their intrinsic depravity and degrade themselves by their debase activity.

Beating within all of us is this raging monster. It lives to feed and seeks the satiating of its appetites. Those who reject Jesus, abandon themselves to such appetites. No one is above this. All must be on guard. This is the New Testament message. The danger in feeding lusts is bondage and ultimately denial. The end game is the forsaking of belief.

The threat of apostasy is real (2:2, 14; “beguiling unstable souls,” “allure through the lusts of the flesh” 2:18). Notice verse 14. The New Testament uses allure [entice] three times. It comes from the word meaning, “bait.”

- But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and **enticed**. (Jams 1:14)

- Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; **beguiling** unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children: (2 Pet. 2:14)
- For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they **allure** through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. (2 Pet. 2:18)

Peter uses the noun three times.

- Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all **guile**, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, (1 Pet. 2:1)
- Who did no sin, neither was **guile** found in his mouth: (1 Pet. 2:22)
- For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no **guile**: (1 Pet. 3:10)

This should come as no surprise, but there is within us a great wickedness craving lasciviousness. Moreover, the devil knows this and seeks to bait us into apostasy.

There is no question as to the outcome of unbelief. What Peter will do is show from the ancient text the predictable outcome of one's rebellion against God. He will use narratives. First, the flood in the days of Noah. Second, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Our study next week will begin there.

VIII. The threat of falsehood is ancient and the outcome is predictable ("For if God" [vv. 4-10])

A. The destruction of sinning angels (vv. 4, 5)

B. The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (vv. 6-14)

**Shepherding the Sheep:** (What is the NEXT STEP?)

1. Friend, to what or to whom are you listening?
2. In what and in whom do you believe?
3. Fear not, God is able to protect those who are His.

<sup>1</sup> <http://stanchfieldbaptist.blogspot.com/2011/02/facing-falsehood-2-peter-21-9.html>

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

<sup>3</sup> A.T. Robertson's *NT Word Pictures* on 2 Peter 2:1.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.desiringgod.org/sermons/where-is-the-promise-of-his-appearing>

<sup>5</sup> <https://net.bible.org/#!/bible/2+Peter+2>

<sup>6</sup> <https://net.bible.org/#!/bible/2+Peter+2>

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.jesusplusnothing.com/studies/online/2pet219.htm\\_](http://www.jesusplusnothing.com/studies/online/2pet219.htm_)

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.icr.org/bible/2Peter/2/1-9/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://net.bible.org/#!/bible/2+Peter+2>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.challies.com/the-discipline-of-spiritual-discernment>

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<sup>11</sup> *Irenaeus Against Heresies* 1.2

<sup>12</sup> <http://carm.org/heresy>

<sup>13</sup> <http://gbgm-umc.org/umw/bible/heresies.stm>

<sup>14</sup> Cross, F.L.; Livingstone, E.A., eds. (1974). "Heresy". *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (2 ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<sup>15</sup> MacGrath, Alister E. *Christian Theology* Blackwell: 2001, 153.

<sup>16</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_Christian\\_heresies#cite\\_ref-3](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Christian_heresies#cite_ref-3)

<sup>17</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_Christian\\_heresies#cite\\_ref-3](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Christian_heresies#cite_ref-3)

<sup>18</sup> [http://www.jesusplusnothing.com/studies/online/2pet219.htm\\_](http://www.jesusplusnothing.com/studies/online/2pet219.htm_)