

## The Anatomy of Spiritual Terrorists (2 Peter 2:10b-22) May 3, 2020

- One of the things we have noticed during this time of crisis is the communication of conflicting information regarding the nature, impact and best way to address this new virus.
  - What is true? Who do you believe?
  - People are vulnerable to misinformation since the beginning of time and this is magnified during times of stress and uncertainty.
- Satan is an opportunist and God's people are called to "be of sober spirit" and "on the alert" as "*your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour*" (1 Pet 5:8)
  - Satan's best tool is spiritual deception.
  - Satan is relentless
  - Things will get worse (2 Tim. 3:13)
- God uses Peter to strip away the "*sheep's clothing*" of the wolves in order to see them for who they really are.
  - This becomes a warning motivated by protecting the Lord's sheep.
  - The nature of this misrepresentation draws God's vivid, intense and colorful language to expose the harm of false teachers.
- Peter paints a graphic portrait with three conspicuous features

### 1. Don't miss seeing their destructive characteristics (2:10b-22)

- **v. 10b:** They are "**daring**": presumptuous, reckless, foolhardy as they boldly make audacious claims
- **v. 10c:** They are "**self-willed**". There's a stubborn insistence on doing that which pleases false teachers rather than the pleasing God and serving the well-being of others.
- **v. 10c-11:** They "**do not tremble when they revile angelic majesties**" There is no hesitation or fear of blaspheming the reputation of others and having an utter disregard for the might and power of fallen angels ("*majestic glories*"). The false

teachers will do what even the angels will not do in bringing “*a reviling judgment*” against fallen angels (v. 11; Jude 8-9)

- **v. 12-13a:** They are “*like unreasoning animals*” who are guided by irrational cravings and passions rather than the rational thinking of humans made in the image of God. They “*have no knowledge*” and will be “*destroyed*” along with the animals when God judges the earth by fire (3:10, 12) as they reap what they sow (“*suffering wrong as the wages of doing wrong*”)
- **v. 13b:** “*they count it a pleasure to revel in the daytime*”. They don’t try to hide their shameful behavior under the cover of darkness, but openly practice their lack of moral restraint (1 Pet 2:15). They earn the description of “*stains and blemishes*”, the opposite of believers who are called to be “*spotless and blameless*” (3:13; 1 Pt. 1:19; Eph. 5:27). They “*revel in their deceptions as they carouse with you*” (turn love-feasts at the Lord’s Supper into a time to deceive others – Jude 12)
- **v. 14a:** “*having eyes full of adultery that never cease from sin*”. Their eyes become windows of their lustful hearts and pornographic minds and they just keep sinning (“*never cease from sin*”). All this baits and preys upon “*unstable souls*” (weak and immature)
- **v. 14b-16:** “*having a heart trained in greed, accursed children*”. They systematically exercise their greedy hearts which God views as a curse on their life. Peter uses the story of the prophet Balaam to show that a dumb donkey had more spiritual insight than a greedy prophet did (Numbers 22-24: God wouldn’t let Balaam curse Israel, but encouraged the Moabite king to get his woman to seduce the Israelite men). Balaam was a senseless fool (“*mad*”) going after “*the wages of unrighteousness*”

## 2. **Don’t miss seeing their devious carnality (2:17-19)**

- **They are phony** (“*springs without water and mists driven by a storm*”): They promise spiritual refreshment to life, but disappoint without fulfillment and create instability.
- **They are punishable** (“*for whom the black darkness is reserved*”). They will experience the painful loneliness, fear, insecurity and isolation of judgment.
- **They are poisonous** (v. 18-19). They poison people’s lives with “*arrogant words of vanity*” (grandiose words of religious hot air) and entice “*by fleshly desires by sensuality*” (they teach and model a lack of moral restraint). They promise “*freedom while they themselves are slaves of corruption*” (As prisoners, they can’t help set anyone free and misrepresent freedom as an opportunity to indulge

your own desires.). Instead of being “*slaves of Christ*”, they are “*slaves of corruption*” (willingly overcome by the lusts of the flesh)

3. **Don't miss seeing their dreaded condition (2:20-22)**

- These false teachers are worse off than if they have never known the way of righteousness (applies as well to those being deceived by them).
- False teachers are like dogs who return to their own vomit and pigs who return to wallowing in the mire. They both act according to their true nature just as false teachers return to their corruption.
- The language Peter uses makes it appear these false teachers and their followers are believers who lose their salvation or have slumped into a deep deception.
  - True believers can't lose their salvation
  - Verse 22 reveals the true condition of their hearts. They have the external appearance of being believers, but they are really contemptible dogs and pigs and worse off than they were without a phony profession of faith (Why? There's greater hardness to receiving the gospel and greater judgment for having greater light and rejecting that light)