

Title: Terrorists in the Church: Description, Danger, Doom of False Teachers (Part10)

Passage: 2 Peter 2:17-22

Theme: The deadly danger of false teachers in the church

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{Read Passage}

10th and last part of "Terrorists in the Church: The Description, Danger, and Doom of False Teachers."

Think about that title one last time "TITC"

It really is an apt metaphor for those who sow seeds of damning doctrine w/i t/CH of JC.

Terrorists in t/world destroy men's bodies.

Terrorists in t/CH destroy men's souls.

Hard to believe that we are finally coming to t/end of this chapt.

Been a difficult week for me; my study time has not been what I would have liked it to have been, particularly as it relates to these last vv. in chapt. 2.

Please bear with me if I am not my usual charming / captivating self.

We'll trust that God will use me in spite of myself this am.

But as we dive back in to chapter 2 – I want to remind you that we've looked at it by way of 3 sections

First Section: Verses 1-3a -

I. The Commencement of False Teachers

{read}

II. The Condemnation of False Teachers

Verse 4 begins an "if / then" clause ("if this, then that"). Rather unusual is that this one doesn't address the "then that" until v. 9.

IOW - Peter opens t/door in v. 4 & cont. on for 5 vv. before closing it!

A. Three examples of God's judgment:

The three examples all have as their baseline the idolatry of sexual sin.

- 1) The angels of Genesis 6:1-4;
- 2) Noah and the great flood;
- 3) Sodom and Gomorrah.

These judgments point to God's final judgment (judgment is something that the FTers denied).

Judgment on one hand.

Also (thankfully)

God's preservation of true believers.

These 2 streams run parallel to each other in this chapter.

B. Summarize the thought once again of vv. 4-9

If God judged the angels (v. 4)

and if he judged the flood generation (v. 5) while at the same time sparing Noah (v. 5)

and if he judged Sodom and Gomorrah (v. 6), while at the same time preserving Lot (vv.7-8)

Then it follows that the Lord will keep secure those who are truly His no matter what is happening around them (drawing from the examples of Noah and Lot).

And it also follows that the Lord will punish the ungodly on the day of judgment (drawing this conclusion from the three examples of the angels, the flood, and Sodom and Gomorrah).

Third Section: Verses 10-22 -

III. The Character of False Teachers (10-22)

These 13 vv. outline the nature of those who mislead others by way of their error as well as sealing their doom, so to speak, as those who would have been better off, like Judas Iscariot, had they never been born.

A wake up call of sorts to those who are wavering in t/faith as well as to every one of us who love God and His Word.

Very quickly ==>

A. They drink deeply at the well of sin (10a)

And especially those who indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires...

This describes men who are gluttons at the table of sin.

Secondly (also in v. 10) ==>

B. They despise authority (10b)

indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires AND DESPISE AUTHORITY...

T/word is in t/singular which imply that they specifically despised t/authority of God.

Much like 2:1, they professed to follow Him, but in reality they deny Him and His rightful place over their lives as their creator.

C. They are both arrogant and ignorant (10c-13a)

That's a deadly combination [^]

...they do not tremble when they speak out against the glorious ones.

We spent a bit of time on who the "glorious ones" are. I've argued that they are fallen angels or demons.

{restate}

Whereas . . .

contrast

angels who are greater in might and power . . .

Greater in might and power than who? The demons.

. . . do not bring a slanderous judgment against them (demons) before the Lord.

They speak out against things they have no knowledge of and little respect for.

Parallel would be some professed Xns who get all engrossed in demonology. They see demons everywhere. And they go around "binding demons" and "stomping on demons" in a misguided attempt to be something they're not.

Jude 9 **But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you."**

D. They are like unreasoning animals in their ignorance (12)

But these, like unreasoning animals, born as creatures of instinct to be captured and destroyed, reviling in their ignorance, will also be destroyed in their corruption.

E. They sin in broad daylight (13a)

They ==>

. . . consider it a pleasure to indulge [themselves] in the daytime.

Result (another play on words) ==>

. . . suffering wrong as the wages of wickedness. . .

Another way of saying what Paul does in Romans 6:

"The wages of sin is death."

F. They are con-men in the fellowship of the saints (13b)

They are stains and blemishes . . .

Were terms used to refer to physical defects, scabs, disease.

They were like malignant sores in t/CH.

. . . .reviling in their deceptions as they feast with you.

Con-men in the fellowship of t/saints who intrude upon 1 of t/most intimate of gatherings in t/CH - Love feast.

G. They are driven by unlawful desires (14a)

having eyes full of adultery and that never cease from sin . . .

1. Literally "Having eyes full of an adulteress"

Very descriptive!

As bad as it is ==>

having eyes full of adultery and that never cease from sin . . .

These men follow through on their wicked desires putting them into action ==>

. . . **enticing unstable souls** . . .

Word is $\delta\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\alpha\zeta\omega$ = to lure (fishing = "to catch with bait"). Same word used in James 1:14.

H. They are greedy (14b-16)

. . . **having a heart trained in greed.**

They are "experts in greed" as one transl. renders it.

Accursed children!

Illustrated ==>

Forsaking the right way they have gone astray, having followed the way of Balaam, the [son] of Basor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness.

That brings us to v. 17 and t/final 3 characteristics of these con-men.

I. They are filled with empty boasting (17-18)

These are springs without water . . .

Jude 12 = **clouds without water**

To understand what Peter is saying you have to understand how valuable a commodity water was.

Jericho, considered t/most ancient of cities, was located where it was because there were wells there.

Water was needed for irrigation (crops); for cleaning; for drinking.

You can imagine what it would be like to be lost in a hot desert looking for water. In t/distance you see what looks to be a watering hole. You make your way there only to find it's dried up.

Some time ago a NJ man died in the Utah desert. He had gone 10 hours w/o water in 100 deg. temps. He was suffering cramps & hallucinating.

He dropped dead of thirst, face down in the dirt, less than 100 yards from a cave with a pool of water.

Worse yet, he was with 11 other hikers being led by expert guides on a wilderness-survival adventure. The guides were carrying emergency water, but the man didn't know that & the guides weren't offering it as they wanted him to push his way to the cave on his own.

The sheriff's deputy who hiked six miles to recover t/body. "They had emergency water right there. I would have given him a drink."

[www.cbsnews.com/stories/2007/05/03/travel/main2757021.shtml]

These false teachers; all who pervert and distort t/gospel of X are like those guides. Only they are blind; and their canteens are filled w/sand.

These are springs without water . . .

There is one true Guide ==>

Isaiah 58:11 “And the LORD will continually guide you, And satisfy your desire in scorched places, And give strength to your bones; And you will be like a watered garden, And like a spring of water whose waters do not fail.

Jeremiah 2:13 “For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, The fountain of living waters, To hew for themselves cisterns, Broken cisterns, That can hold no water.

Cf. Jeremiah 14:1–9

Phys. water sustains phys. life; spiritual water sustains spiritual life.

John 7:38 “He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.’”

These are springs without water . . .

Other half of that ==>

. . . . and mists driven by a storm . . .

Prob. referring to clouds that look like they will deliver rain, but don't.

Note the picture of something that promises much, but doesn't deliver (it disappoints, fatally so).

They promise something new, fresh, but deliver nothing. They are charlatans.

. . . . for whom the deep gloom of darkness has been reserved.

Judgment - cf. 2:4.

Jude 13 wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam; wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever.

3x in t/book of Matt. Jesus referred to t/final destiny of t/wicked as a place of "outer darkness" (8:12, 22:13, 25:30).

Judgment has been "reserved" (τηρησω = to guard, keep, reserve).

Same word used in 1 Peter 1:4 ==>

. . . . **inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,**

What a contrast!

I. They are filled with empty boasting (17-18)

For by speaking arrogant, empty [words]

IOW they are what we sometimes call "Blow-hards" (lots of em' on so-called Xn TV).

. . . they entice [same word used in v. 14 – how?] by fleshly desires, by sensuality . . . [again v. 14]

. . . .those who barely escape from the ones who live in error;

What does that mean? Difficult phrase {repeat}

I think what Peter is saying here once again parallels v. 14.

having eyes full of adultery and that never cease from sin, enticing unstable souls . . .

|
. . . .those who barely escape from the ones who live in error;

The false teachers bait their hooks looking, not for well-trained, solid, theologically-minded, Spirit-filled disciples (what we have as our goal here)

But

Immature, uneducated, theological novices whom they hope to lure away to their error.

Yet, because these novices are true believers, they escape, but barely.

True believers can be deceived at times. I don't believe they can be fatally deceived, but we know that true Xns get led astray & by God's grace they are restored.

What we may have in v. 18 are 2 classes: The elect who persevere in the faith and apostates who don't.

1 John 5:16 **If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask and God will for him give life to those who commit sin not leading to death. There is a sin leading to death; I do not say that he should make request for this.**

I'm speaking only for myself, but I do not feel compelled (supported by this passage) to pray for those who wilfully and finally have left t/faith. We've experienced that here - those who we thought were true believers, who said that they believed in t/Gospel of grace, who left that behind for institutional religion.

J. They promise freedom while they are slaves of corruption (19)

They promise them freedom . . .

Freedom to do as one pleases w/o fear of judgment. Libertines.

"Free from the law, O happy condition; now I can go and live like perdition."

. . . . **while they themselves are slaves of corruption.**

Interesting that freedom can run full circle and become bondage.

That "kind" of freedom isn't really free.

We saw it in the 1960s and we're still reaping t/consequences: free love; free marriages; no marriage; do as you please, so long as it feels good and doesn't hurt anyone else – but that's the rub – it does hurt others.

And it's not freedom.

Those who indulge in the culture of "do as you please" find out that they are slaves to their own supposed freedom.

Peter adds a proverbial statement / an aphorism ==>

For whatever overcomes a person, to this he is enslaved.

Truism!

How many people think they can drink all they want & become slaves to the by-product of grapes?

John 8:34 **Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin.**

No one is in more bondage than he who is a slave to his sin.

No one is freer than he who is Christ's slave.

Peter was a slave of Christ, 1:1.

1 Peter 2:16 Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God.

Note Romans 6:16-22.

1 Corinthians 6:12–15 12 All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything. 13 Food is for the stomach, and the stomach is for food; but God will do away with both of them. Yet the body is not for immorality, but for the Lord; and the Lord is for the body. 14 Now God has not only raised the Lord, but will also raise us up through His power. 15 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take away the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot?

May it never be!

Galatians 5:1 IT was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

Those who don't stand firm, those who return to t/yoke of slavery==>

K. They evidence their apostasy by returning to their former ways

(20-22)

For if after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled and overcome by them, the last state has become worse for them than the first.

These people looked like they were real believers.

Note the wording in 1 ==>

1:3-4 3 seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. 4 For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

Apparently, they had everything except being partakers of the divine nature (union w/X).

They came into the church and escaped the defilement of the world.

The church is a safe-harbor, even for the unconverted.

Jesus' parable of the soils.

Luke 8:5-15 5 “The sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell beside the road; and it was trampled under foot, and the birds of the air ate it up. 6 “And other seed fell on rocky soil, and as soon as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. 7 “And other seed fell among the thorns; and the thorns grew up with it, and choked it out. 8 “And other seed fell into the good soil, and grew up, and produced a crop a hundred times as great.”

11 “Now the parable is this: the seed is the word of God. 12 “And those beside the road are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their heart, so that they may not believe and be saved. 13 “And those on the rocky soil are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no firm root; they believe

for a while, and in time of temptation fall away. 14 “And the seed which fell among the thorns, these are the ones who have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with worries and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to maturity. 15 “And the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance.

**... they are again entangled and overcome by [the world]
the last state has become worse for them than the first.**

That statement is borrowed from Jesus' words in Matt. 12.

Was talking about demons, unclean spirits, who leave the person in whom they were dwelling only to come back again taking along 7 other wicked spirits.

...and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first. That is the way it will also be with this evil generation.”

Why? Is it worse?

What will be worse? Judgment.

The more light you sin against the greater your judgment will be (Luke 12:47ff).

Secondarily, those who depart from t/faith rarely return to it. Apostates are sealed in their doom. To presume to be a Xn is bad.

To depart from t/faith into apostasy is terrifying.

Akin to the unpardonable sin.

Next verse elaborates.

For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment delivered to them.

"Holy commandment" - 3:2.

Body of Xn truth as handed down by t/Apostles through JC.

Gospel.

Jude 3 **the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.**

"The gospel is not simply an offer; it is a demand that must be obeyed, a point lost on the heretics." [G. Green, 305]

Paul in Acts 17 - God commanding all men everywhere to repent.

holy commandment.

For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than having known it, to turn away from [that] holy commandment . . .

Hebrews 6:4–8 4 For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, 5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God, and put Him to open shame.

Hebrews 10:26 For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,

It has happened to them according to the true proverb: A DOG RETURNS TO ITS OWN VOMIT, and, *a sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mud.*

Which one is the true Proverb?

The 1st. From Prov. 26:11.

The second probably comes from an ancient Assyrian named Ahiqar who had a collection of sayings and proverbs attributed to him.

Two examples ==>

A DOG RETURNS TO ITS OWN VOMIT, and, *a sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mud.*

What's the point?

Both dogs and pigs were unclean animals.

Pigs, in our culture, thought to be cute and smart (Charlotte's Web / Babe). Two movies that would have failed at the box office in Israel.

Dogs were little better. In all ancient eastern cultures they were despised.

What do we do with all this?

Sobering.

Does this refer to real authentic Christians? Many would say "yes."

I think we can say "no" w/o doing violence to the text or t/warnings.

Fine line between those who are genuine believers and those who are not.

That fine line is hard and fast; it cannot be crossed and it's a thread that cannot be broken. But it's there and we have to live with the tension of having confidence in Christ (Paul, *I know whom I have believed*) and taking nothing for granted (Peter ==>)

1:10–11 10 Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; 11 for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

2 quotes ==>

The best solution is to say that the language used in 2 Peter is phenomenological. In other words, Peter used the language of 'Christians' to describe those who fell away because they gave every appearance of being Christians. They confessed Christ as Lord and Savior, were baptized and joined the church. But the false teachers and some of those they seduced, though still present physically in the church were no longer considered to be genuine believers by Peter. Nonetheless, he used 'Christian' language to describe them, precisely because of their participation in the church, because they gave some evidence initially of genuine faith. Those who had apostatized revealed that they were never truly part of the people of God, for remaining true

to the faith is one sign that one truly belongs to God. . . . Peter pointed it the same direction [as John in 1 John 2:19] in the illustration of the dog and pig. In the final analysis, those who fell away never really changed their nature. They remained dogs and pigs inside. [Schreiner, 364-65]

. . . Peter is not teaching that God's elect can lose their salvation. He is most definitely teaching that church members can be lost, and people who make outward professions of faith and even begin to clean up their lives can turn away from Christ and be lost. But in verse 22 he explains to us in a proverb that we should not be overly surprised at this: dogs characteristically return to their vomit; and no matter how clean you make a pig on the outside, if it is still a pig, it will return to the mire. In other words, those who leave the way of righteousness, never to return, simply show that their inner nature had never been changed. This was Peter's way of saying what 1 John 2:19 says, "They went out from us, but they were not of us, for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that it might be plain that they are all not of us." Or as Jesus said, "He who endures to the end will be saved" (Matt. 10:22). Or as Hebrews puts it, "We share in Christ if we hold our first confidence firm to the end" (Hebrews 3:14). Or as Paul says, "I preached to you the gospel which you received, in which you stand, by which you are saved, if you hold it fast" (1 Cor. 15:1, 2). The whole New Testament is agreed: there is no salvation apart from persevering faith. And persevering faith always works itself out in the way of righteousness. Therefore, to abandon the way of righteousness is to exclude oneself from salvation. But this can never happen to God's

e l e c t . . . [J o h n P i p e r , s e r m o n 2 P e t e r
desiringgod.org/resource-library/sermons/better-never-to-have-known-the-way]

1. We live in perilous times: Be diligent
to make your own calling and election sure + to stand fast for truth.

2. We have a God who is able to keep us: Be encouraged
He who began a good work in you will perfect it.

As we saw of Noah & Lot - 2:9

. . . the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation . . .

Jude 24-25