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## 2 Peter 2

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

## 2 Peter 2.

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**INTRODUCTION:** Peter probably wrote this letter from a Roman prison about A.D. 67–68, shortly before his death. Twisted versions of Christian truth were being taught, which Peter describes in vivid terms in chapter 2. He recalls his firsthand experience of Christ's glory at the Transfiguration (1:17-18). He explains the more sure truth of the Gospel which he likens to a lamp shining in a dark place (1:19) and an antidote to heresy. In chapter 3 he focuses on those who scoff at the idea of Christ's triumphant return and the final judgment and states that as God once destroyed the earth with water, he will one day judge it again with fire. In the light of this truth Peter warns those in Christ that they should live in a manner that honours God and brings a good testimony to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ as they patiently wait for his glorious return and the salvation he has promised to all believers.

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### Topics.

- False prophets with destructive heresies arose among the people.
- God did not spare angels when they sinned but cast them into hell.
- Angels kept in chains of gloomy darkness.
- Noah, the ancient world, Sodom and Gomorrah.
- Angels bring not a railing accusation against authorities before the Lord.
- Blots and blemishes in God's Kingdom and the way of Balaam.
- Waterless springs and mists driven by a storm.
- The dog that returns to its own vomit, and the sow, that returns to the mire.

**The previous chapter:** in the previous chapter Peter spoke of God's grace and peace being multiplied through the Lord Jesus Christ; of God's diving power and precious promises being granted us in all things; of spiritual blindness and of a rich entrance into the eternal Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. He said the apostles did not follow cleverly devised myths and that the word of prophecy is an even more sure word than the apostle's testimony. Peter talks of a lamp shining in a dark place until the day dawns and of a morning star rising in the human heart.

**NOTE:** for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

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## 2 PETER 2:1-3

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### False Prophets Arose Among the People.

- **2 Peter 2:1-3:** But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. <sup>2</sup>And many will follow their sensuality (Pernicious in KJV) and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed (Evil spoken of in KJV). <sup>3</sup>And in their greed they will exploit (Make merchandise in KJV) of you with false words. Their condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.

**Sensuality:** (pernicious in KJV) does not simply refer to people who live a lifestyle of unlawful sex and such like things, but also embraces those who live to gratify self, ego and pride (the flesh) with excessive worldly wealth and riches and who indulge themselves in the opulent luxuries of this world. This is because sensuality carries the idea of self-indulgence the idea behind the word sensuality can be applied to any lifestyle that lives life simply to gratify the cravings of the flesh (self, ego, pride and greed etc.), for the things of this world or to sexual indulgences (i.e., selfishly using others to gratify one's own sensual passions).

**False prophets and destructive heresies:** Peter is warning those who belong to Christ that as false prophets arose among Israel in the Old Testament false teachers will continue to arise among those in Christ until the Lord returns and tells them that certain religious men will pervert and use the Gospel for their own gain by using their followers as merchandise to make themselves wealthy and rich and because of their wicked behaviour and lack of integrity those of the secular world will speak against the Christian faith. Perhaps this is one of the reasons statistics in 2012 stated that 44% of people have left the churches, and 82% of secular people do not want to enter a church. Based on these verses and others like it some religious groups have separated from anyone in the body of Christ who hold a different view of certain Scriptures to their particular group, but Peter is not saying we should only consider our brothers and sisters in Christ to be those who believe every doctrine in the exact way that we do, but rather has in mind those who:

- Deny the Lord Jesus Christ, this denial of Christ is most likely through denying salvation by grace and in its place teaching that we are saved by works and adhering to ceremonial rites and holy days and keeping religious customs and traditions or by having perfect doctrinal knowledge since if they blatantly denied Christ no brother or sister in the Lord would even listen to their teachings let alone be deceived by them.
- Teach doctrines that lead to ungodly lifestyles.
- Use their followers for their own gain by their masterful oratory skills in speech making.
- Cause those outside the Kingdom of God to speak against the Christian faith.

The words, "Destructive heresies" (v1) do not refer to every doctrine of the Bible, but to any doctrine that would lead a person away from Christ, away from grace and toward ungodly behaviour. Many (especially the Jews) during Peter's era accepted Jesus as the Messiah the Christ and Son of God, but still believed they were saved by keeping ceremonial rites and religious customs and traditions, they could not accept grace. Yet other than denying Christ, denying grace is one of the most destructive heresies of the Christian message. The following words of Paul show the enormous importance of trusting in God's grace in Christ. Paul in his letters wrote:

- I do not nullify the *GRACE* of God, for if justification were through the law (or any form of religious self-effort), then Christ died for no purpose (Gal. 2:21).

This means, when a brother or sister in Christ begin to justify themselves through the law and self-effort, they nullify the grace of God and by their actions declare that Christ's death was of no value. Equally as horrific as this Paul states:

- When we forsake *GRACE* we separate ourselves from Christ because it was only by *GRACE* that God made us alive in Christ (Gal. 5:4) (Eph. 2:5).

Paul to highlight even more the majestic glory of grace wrote with absolute boldness that:

- It is only by *GRACE* that any brother or sister has been saved (Ephsians 2:8).

Paul in these verses is shining a brilliant floodlight on the truth that every brother and sister in Christ is saved, solely by faith and by grace and it is not their own doing, but the gift of God. This means that without grace no-one can be united to Christ and whoever is without Christ is separated from God and without God no-one can be saved to eternal life. This means in regards to eternal salvation, Christ, God, Grace and Faith, are all on an equal par with each other since no-one can be saved to eternal life without any one of them. This is the reason the author in the book of Hebrews spends so many chapters brilliantly and skilfully explaining to the Hebrews that they must stop their sin of trusting in religious works, the Levitical Law and their priesthood to be counted righteous before God and start trusting in the grace of God that is in Christ and in his righteousness to be saved to eternal life.

By extension this means that Christians must stop trusting in attending a church building every week, strictly adhering to ceremonial rites and holy days and keeping religious customs and traditions to be saved. Though the practise of some of these maybe good in themselves they become grossly sinful when believers trust in them for their salvation since not one of them has any power to save to eternal life.

**Their destruction is not asleep:** it is not uncommon to speak of "sleepless justice" the idea in the words, "Their condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep" (v3) is that though justice may have seemed to slumber or to linger it is not really so. Judgment here is represented as a living thing, awake and expectant with an ever-watchful eye. It is as through an angel of judgment is pursuing after such corrupt ministers of the Christian faith approaching nearer and nearer with vengeance that will destroy. No-one no matter how careful they are to conceal their sins should think that the eyes of God are not watching or that the angel of justice will always slumber and linger, for a time will come when judgment and destruction will come to overtake them.

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## 2 PETER 2:4

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### **God did not Spare Angels when they Sinned, but Cast them into Hell.**

- **2 Peter 2:4:** For if God did not spare angels when they sinned but cast them into hell (Tartaros) and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment

**Hell:** (Haides) means, unseen the place or state of the dead (i.e. the grave).

**Hell:** (tartaroo) carries the idea of the deepest abyss of Hades (i.e. the grave)

**Hell, the Pit, Hades, Sheol, the underworld and the place of the dead:** are all different names for the grave it is the place where all humans go when they die. Those without God are referred to as being in hell (the grave) the place of the dead, while those who have died in Christ are spoken of as being asleep in Christ.

**Angels being kept until the Day of Judgement:** those who have died in Christ are referred to as sleeping because they will be resurrected to eternal life and everlasting glory in the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-5) to rule and reign as kings and priests with Christ in his Kingdom when he returns as King of kings and Lord of lords to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth. The dead who have died without Christ are being kept in the grave for the day of judgment and the Second Death (Rev. 20:11-15) when God descends at the end of Christ's millennial reign to earth on a Great White Throne (a symbol of pure judgment and justice) and death and Hades and the sea give up the dead who were in them and each one is judged according to what they had done. According to what is written in the books.

**NOTE:** if everyone standing before God's throne is judged to eternal condemnation and cast into the Lake of Fire there would not be any need for a judgment so from this judgment it appears that some are counted worthy and others are cast into the Lake of Fire (the Second Death) which means eternal death (i.e., total extinction) (Rev. 20:11-15). For further information see the links at the end of this chapter.

**Angels cast into hell:** to help understand what Peter is saying when he made the statement:

- God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment (v4).

We need to do a little study on the word angels as used throughout the Bible since it is certain there are no literal angels bound up in steel chains. The Bible says, God's angels are:

- Ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation? (Hebrews 1:14-14).

So, the angles that Peter has in mind are clearly not God's heavenly angels since they are serving God and doing His will, so who are these angels that have grossly sinned? To help us to find the answer to this question we first need to look at the Hebrew and Greek meaning of the word angel.

**Angel's:** from Strong's Concordance; in the New Testament is the translation of the Greek word *aggelos*. It is used every time in the New Testament (except for Luke chapter twenty). *Aggelos* can refer to a messenger sent from God to bring tidings, an angel an envoy or to one who is sent (i.e., a human or supernatural angel). The same word *aggelos* is used all of the time in the New Testament for God's supernatural angels, but the same word also applies in many instances to human messengers.

**Angels can be human messengers:** both the Hebrew word *mal'ak* in the Old Testament and the Greek word *aggelos* in the New Testament are words that both mean messenger. Both words have been translated in some verses as angel and in others as messenger. In the Old Testament God and Jacob, Moses, Israel, Joshua, Gideon, Jephthah, Saul, David, Abner, Hiram, Joab, Elisha, Amaziah and Ahaz, are all spoken of as sending angels (*mal'ak*) who were human men. A human called an angel (*mal'ak*) is spoken of as going to Micaiah, Elisha's elders and Jehu, Jezreel and Job.

Haggai is called an angel (*mal'ak*) and the book of proverbs says a king's wrath, a wicked man and a cruel human can be an angel. The Bible speaks of human angels (*mal'ak*) of a nation and calls the LORD'S spiritually blind servants and the Old Testament priest angels (*mal'ak*). It is clear that it was the common Hebrew language to call certain human beings an angel (*mal'ak*) and that many angels of the Bible are human men both good and bad.

**In the New Testament:** John the Baptist and Jesus are both spoken of as human angels (*mal'ak*) and it is stated that they both sent human angels (*mal'ak*). Titus is spoken of as an angel (*mal'ak*) of the church and Rahab is said to have received angels (*mal'ak*) referring to two human men thus it is clearly seen that in many instances the English word angels (*aggelos*) which means messenger or representatives are often human men.

It appears that the Bible translators have in most instances translated the Hebrew word *mal'ak* to the English word angels when they are identified with God or heaven and translated it to the word messengers when the identification is with man or the earth, thus when man sends a *mal'ak* (angels) the translators of the Bible have translated the Hebrew word *mal'ak* to messenger, but when God sends a *mal'ak* the translators of the Bible have translated the Hebrew word *mal'ak* to angel. Throughout the Bible it is very common language for human *mal'ak*'s (angels) to be sent

by prophets, Kings, rulers and Israel, therefore it is most likely angels in the context of this chapter refer to corrupt and self-serving human men who have great positions of religious authority, political power and influence amongst the Kingdom of God, the church and the world which is in harmony with the entire context of this chapter. For further information see the title:

- Angels (Can be Human Messengers).
- In Angels (ON WEBSITE MENU).

The focus of the chapter is false prophets and teachers, Peter is warning those who have the great privilege of proclaiming God's message of grace and eternal life to be aware that if they use it for their own gain, to get rich and wealthy, or for power, fame and importance by using their followers as merchandise to fulfil their own selfish ambition they will not be spared from God's wrath. Peter in this chapter is shining a spotlight on the truth that just because a man may have great knowledge of the Bible or establish a vast religious empire does not protect him from God's justice or vengeance if they have built the Lord's Kingdom for their own selfish ambition and gain especially if they have perverted the Good News of the Gospel to achieve it. These men are gifted and fully equipped with all the skills and tools to build God's Kingdom, but are driven not by a heart filled with love for God and his people, but by their own selfish ambition for power, control, importance and wealth that they receive by being the head of some form of a religious system, organisation, institution or church.

**Angels Kept in Chains of Gloomy Darkness:** the words:

- They are being kept in chains of gloomy darkness (v4).

Refers to the unfaithful who have died (especially false teachers) it is in contrast to the faithful in Christ who are spoken of as "Sleeping in Christ." No dead person has actual steel chains wrapped around their dead body, the words gloomy darkness is biblical lofty language that not only depicts the absolute disdain God has toward false prophets and teachers who pervert the Gospel and use those seeking Christ for their own selfish gain and ambition, but also illustrates that they will be judged accordingly. It is in contrast to the warming and endearing words sleeping in Christ the Bible writers use when referring to the faithful who have died in Christ. Here the words depict God's favour being on those who have died in faith in Christ and that they will be, welcomed with joy at the resurrection.

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## 2 PETER 2:5-8

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### Noah, the Ancient World, Sodom and Gomorrah.

- **2 Peter 2:5-8:** if he did not spare the ancient world but preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness with seven others, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly<sup>6</sup> if by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes he condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly<sup>7</sup> and if he rescued righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked<sup>8</sup> for as that righteous man lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard)

Peter is warning anyone who would use the glorious Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and those who belong to God's Kingdom as merchandise for their own selfish gain that they will not escape God's Judgment. He does this by shining a spotlight on the fact that:

- God destroyed the entire world that Noah (a preacher of righteousness) lived amongst and saved only Noah and his family.
- God destroyed the entire world that Lot (a righteous man) lived amongst and saved only Lot and his family.

### **The Lord knows how to Rescue the Godly from Trials.**

- **2 Peter 2:9:** then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment.

Here is the glory, wonder and beauty of the Lord, Noah and Lot lived amongst a grossly sinful generation, yet they remained faithful to God and the LORD saved them from certain destruction. This shows that Christians do not need to form communes and isolate themselves from the world, but rather live in the world and not only share their faith when they are able, but live a life that honors God and brings a good testimony to Christ and the Christian faith.

**Until the Day of Judgment:** the punishment of false prophets and teachers is being kept in store for them until the Day of judgment. Their punishment is the Second Death where they will be cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal death (i.e. total extinction). For further information see the links at the end of the chapter.

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## 2 PETER 2:10

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### **Blaspheming the Glorious Ones.**

- **2 Peter 2:10:** and especially those who indulge in the lust of defiling passion and despise authority (Governments in KJV) Bold and wilful they do not tremble as they blaspheme the glorious ones,

The King James Bible says:

- But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness.

**Indulge in the lust of defiling passion:** indulging in the lust of defiling passions and walking after the flesh (self, ego and pride) does not only refer to people who live a lifestyle of unlawful sex, orgies, adulteries (acts of sexual deceitfulness, infidelities, disloyalties and betrayals), incest, paedophilia and having multiple sex partners or using the opposite sex to fulfil one's own selfish lust and such like things. But also embraces those who live to gratify self, ego and pride (the flesh) with excessive worldly wealth and riches and who indulge themselves in the opulent luxuries of this world. This is because walking after the flesh carries the idea of self-indulgence the idea behind the word "defiling passions" can be applied to any lifestyle that lives life simply to gratify the cravings of the flesh (self, ego, pride and greed etc.) for the things of this world or to sexual indulgences (i.e., selfishly using others to gratify one's own sensual passions).

**Despise authority (despise governments in KJV):** Peter states that punishment is being kept until the Day of Judgment for those who despise authority and governments. Since God's call for Christians to obey governments has caused much confusion amongst many Christians it will help us to understand what Peter has in mind by referring to what the apostle Paul wrote in his letter to the brothers and sisters in Christ who lived in Rome. Paul wrote:

- Let every person be subject to the governing authorities because there is no authority except from God therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad so do what is good, and you will receive the authorities approval, because they are *God's servant for your good*. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for they do not bear the sword in vain, because they are the servant of God, an avenger who *carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer* (Rom. 13:1-5).

The Christian religion was designed to extend throughout the world establishing a Kingdom amongst other kingdoms. Christians profess supreme allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ he is their Lawgiver, their Sovereign and their Judge therefore Paul addresses the question:

- What kind of allegiance are they to render to earthly authorities?

Especially, considering that the kingdoms of the world were then pagan kingdoms which had been generally founded in conquest, blood and oppression. Many of the kings were not only unprincipled men, but were morally polluted in their private lives and oppressive in their public administration thus Paul is addressing the question:

- Should Christians acknowledge the laws of such kingdoms and of such authorities?

Many of the early Christians were composed of Jewish converts who had long been under Roman authority and oppression which was founded in a system of idolatry, thus the difficult question:

- How far should they submit, if at all, to heathen authorities?

The circumstances for the Gentile converts was not much different since they would naturally look with abhorrence on the system of idolatry which they had forsaken and regard it as opposed to God, but since pagan religion was interwoven with the civil institutions and authorities there also existed danger that they might denounce the rulers of government altogether and be regarded as opposed to the laws of the land. Naturally when the laws interfered with the rights of conscience; when they commanded the worship of idols or any moral wrong then it is right for Christians to resist the laws and take a stand, but where is the line to be drawn? The words "Be subject" denotes that kind of submission which soldiers render to their officers. It implies a willingness to occupy our proper place, to yield to the authority of those over us, but it does not designate the 'specific extent' of the submission, but rather presents it as a general principal which would be to obey in all things which are not contrary to the Law of God. It is most certain that the authorities Paul had in mind are the Roman rulers since he is writing to brothers and sister in Rome, but by extension the principal he is teaching extends to all generations.

The reason Paul says Christians should be subject to the authorities over them is that governing rulers have received their appointment from God and therefore since Christians are to be subject to God they should honour God by honouring the system of government which he has instituted for mankind even if rulers had secured it, not according to justice, but by oppression. The reason for this is because once a ruling government is established, how it was established is not the concern of a Christian since it is not their duty to seek to overturn it for without government there could be no society, no security, no private property; all would be confusion and anarchy and all nations would soon be in extreme Chaos. In all nations of the earth there is a constitution (a plan by which a particular country or state is governed) and this constitution is less or more calculated to promote the interests of the community.

The civil authority agrees to govern according to that constitution and in this way, there is an agreement and consent between the ruling government and those they are governing, but what if the ruler is an immoral man should Christians submit to his rule? If he is ruling according to the constitution nothing can justify rebellion against his authority no-matter how irregular he maybe in his own private life; he may disgrace himself by an improper conduct, but if he is ruling according to the law and makes no attempt to change the constitution nor break the agreement between him and the people there is no legal ground of opposition to his civil authority and every act against him would be considered rebellion and unlawful. No personal misconduct in the ruler, no immorality in his own life, while he governs according to law, can justify either rebellion against him or contempt of his authority since he

is accountable only to the people for his political conduct, for his private life and moral conduct he is accountable to his own conscience and to God. Nevertheless, opposition to a ruler can be justified when there are overt attempts on his part to change the constitution or to rule contrary to law. When the ruler acts in this way he dissolves the agreement between him and his people and therefore his authority is no longer binding because it then becomes illegal since he is acting contrary to the laws of that constitution according to which on being raised to the supreme power he promised to govern. This conduct and actions that are contrary to the law justifies opposition to his government, but a wise person will wait for the right time and find a legal way to bring about change according to law.

**IN CONCLUSION:** Paul is stating a general principle (i.e., submit to authorities who are appointed to keep the law and administer justice otherwise you will come under their wrath). The entire focus is on authorities who are appointed to bring the wrongdoer to justice and thereby protect the innocent (meaning they have been appointed for the good of the people not their harm) (v4).

**Blaspheme the glorious ones:** Peter states punishment is being kept until the Day of Judgment for those who:

- Blaspheme the glorious ones (v10).

While the King James Bible says:

- Speak evil of dignities.

Based on the English standard Bible this would apply to those who speak against those who belong to God's Kingdom and based on the King James Bible it would apply to those who speak against governments and authorities of nations and countries etc. It is pointless to debate over which Peter had in mind since it matters not because punishment is being kept until the Day of Judgment for those who blaspheme God's glorious ones and for those who speak evil of governments and authorities of nations who do their best to rule according to the constitution and according to justice (howbeit limited and never perfect).

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## 2 PETER 2:11

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### **Angels bring not a Railing Accusation against Authorities.**

- **2 Peter 2:11:** whereas angels though greater in might and power, do not pronounce a blasphemous judgment against them before the Lord.

Peter focus so far has been on false religious teachers who are so arrogant and puffed up in pride that they speak against governments and those who hold high position of authority. He is now highlighting the fact that even God's faithful ministers (or heavenly angels) do not show such disrespect to dignities, governments and leaders of nations. Though Abraham, Elijah, David, Paul, John and such like men were spoken of as angels of God, meaning they held highly exalted positions and were truly faithful men in God's Kingdom there is no-doubt that Peter may will have had God's heavenly angels in mind in this context since whether it is God's faithful ministers or God's heavenly angels the same principal applies which is to give honour and respect to who honour and respect is due, whether they belong to God's Kingdom or not.

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## 2 PETER 2:12-14

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### **Blots and Blemishes in God's Kingdom.**

- **2 Peter 2:12-14:** But these like irrational animals, creatures of instinct, born to be caught and destroyed, blaspheming about matters of which they are ignorant, will also be destroyed in their destruction <sup>13</sup>suffering wrong as the wage for their wrongdoing. They

count it pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, while they feast with you. <sup>14</sup>They have eyes full of adultery, insatiable for sin. They entice unsteady souls. They have hearts trained in greed. Accursed children!

The focus of Peter in this chapter is on false prophets and religious teachers (v1) who:

- Teach doctrines that lead away from grace and the Lord Jesus Christ (v1).
- Are full of greed and therefore exploit their followers with false teachings (v3).
- Have no shame in speaking against governments or authorities (v10).
- Take pleasure in corrupt behaviour and revel in deceiving their followers (v13).
- Have eyes that lust on married woman and crave to sin with them (v14).
- Love gain even if it's from wrongdoing (especially money) (v15).
- Are full of arrogance and pride boasting in their-own achievements (v18).
- Use their fame and importance to entice vulnerable woman to their bed (v18).
- Promise freedom, while they themselves are slaves of corruption (v19).
- Had the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ (v20).

The words, "While they feast with you" (v13) show how grossly corrupt these men are, they fellowship with their followers fully conscious they are living a double life and fully conscious they are deceiving those they are feasting with for their own gain. Peter is now shining a floodlight on the truth that religious teachers with such a gross lack of integrity and magnified self-interest are blots and blemishes in God's Kingdom. In fact Peter was so disgusted with religious men like this taking advantage of the naive' and the innocent who were seeking God that he calls them brute beasts. To get a true sense of how Peter felt and the intense fury toward such men ponder for a moment, Peter lived with Christ and deeply loved the Lord, he not only personally witnessed Jesus love for even the lowest of sinners, but also witnessed the brutal cruel and bloody death Christ suffered that we might be saved. Is it any wonder Peter expresses his extreme disgust toward such men in such graphic and lofty language.

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## 2 PETER 2:15-16

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### The Way of Balaam.

- **2 Peter 2:15-16:** Forsaking the right way, they have gone astray. They have followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved gain from wrongdoing <sup>16</sup>but was rebuked for his own transgression; a speechless donkey spoke with human voice and restrained the prophet's madness.

Balak King of the Moabites three times offered Balaam silver gold and the king's great honour to curse Israel. Balaam enticed by the silver gold and the king's great honour went to curse Israel for money. Balaam attempted to prophecy a curse on Israel, but every time God turned Balaam's prophecies into a blessing. Balaam knew, if he could turn Israel from God and bring about their fall, king Balak would give him the reward he had promised so Balaam for greed of money advised the Moabite king to have the Moabite woman seduce the men of Israel to idolatry. The Israelites

were seduced by the women into idolatry and twenty-four thousand Israelites perished, until they repented of their idolatry. This is the reason Balaam is held up in the New Testament as an example of self-serving and greedy religious teachers and the destructive influence of hypocritical teachers who attempt to lead God's people astray for importance and fame and their own selfish gain and greed. No Bible character is more severely used, as an example of a man's offensiveness to God. The madness of Balaam was that he not only considered cursing God's people for gain, but that he also went with the servants of Balak fully believing he could. This is the insanity of a mind and heart that only cares about self and is fully driven by ego, pride and greed.

**The full story can be found in:**

- (Num. chapter 22 and 23) (Deut. 23:3-6) (Joshua 24:9-10).

The blessings of Balaam's prophecies can be found in:

- (Num. 23:7-10) (Num. 23:18-24) (Num. 24:3-9) (Num. 24:15-24).

**Balaam was rebuked by a donkey:** the LORD'S anger was kindle against Balaam because he went to curse Israel so God sent the Angel of the LORD to act as an adversary against him, but Balaam's donkey saw the Angel and fled, but Balaam was determined to go so he struck his donkey and continued his journey on the road. The LORD enabled the donkey to speak and tell Balaam that there was an angel with his sword drawn set against him. The LORD then opened the eyes of Balaam and he also saw the Angel of the LORD. The angel told Balaam what he was doing was perverse before God. Balaam said to the angel, "He would turn back." The angel told Balaam to go, but only speak the word that God gives him, so Balaam went (Num. 22:22-35).

**God knew Balaam's heart:** God clearly knew he would only give words of blessing to Balaam to speak upon Israel, but Balaam heart was so wickedly obsessed with silver gold and the king's great honour he thought he would still be able to curse Israel. We know Balaam's heart was grossly wicked, because when he failed to curse Israel he counselled the king to have the Moabite women seduce the men of Israel and all this for money and a pagan's kings honour, such is the craving of the flesh (self, ego, pride and greed) in those who are so narcissistic, vain, egotistical and self-absorbed that to them the only person of any value to serve is self.

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## 2 PETER 2:17-19

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**Waterless Springs and Mists Driven by a Storm.**

- **2 Peter 2:17-19:** These are waterless springs and mists driven by a storm. For them the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved. <sup>18</sup>For, speaking loud boasts of folly, they entice by sensual passions of the flesh those who are barely escaping from those who live in error. <sup>19</sup>They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption. For whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved.

Once again, we see Peter using lofty language to show his utter disdain toward religious teachers who like Balaam use their privileged position for their own gain. They are those who are hypocritical, full of pretence, deceit and lies, they knowingly deceive for their own gain and rejoice in their cleverness in deceiving their followers such is the depth of evil in their hearts.

**Gloom and darkness:** the gloom of utter darkness (v17) refers to the second death at the end of Christ's millennial Kingdom when the sea, death and Hades gives up the dead and they all stand before God's throne. Books are opened and those standing before God are judged by what is written in these books according to what they have done some are counted worthy while others are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal death (i.e., total extinction) (Rev. 20:11-15).

### **The Dog that returns to its own Vomit, and the Sow, that Returns to the Mire.**

- **2 Peter 2:20-22:** For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. <sup>21</sup>For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them. <sup>22</sup>What the true proverb says has happened to them: "The dog returns to its own vomit, and the sow, after washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire."

It is important to take these verses in context with the entire chapter, which has been solely focused on corrupt religious leaders who have been enlightened to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, but rather than serve the Lord they are serving self. These are men who rather than have Christ sit as King on the throne of their heart they have self firmly seated there with its buddies' pride, ego and greed. Added to this they not only use their privileged position for their own glory and their own gain, but use their followers as merchandise to fulfil their own selfish ambition. This is why Peter uses such strong language and refers to them as dogs returning to their own vomit, and as pigs who after washing themselves return to role in the mud. These are the false prophets and teachers that Peter is talking about in the beginning of the chapter. They are hypocritical teachers (not supernatural angels) that pervert the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ for their own gain.

**Important note:** Peter is not talking about people that have fallen away from the Gospel through hurt, confusion or the weakness of the flesh. Many brothers and sisters fall from the faith, but not from a wilful heart or for any personal gain, but because:

- They have been raised in a very dogmatic and legalistic religious home brought up in churches with the same dogmatic and legalistic control.
- The minister they respected has failed them in some gross manner.
- People in the congregation have deeply hurt them for some reason.

And of course, there would be many other reasons brothers and sisters fall, but these people are not like the false teachers Peter has in focus since they are not using Christ for their own gain. They need love and encouragement not condemnation. God's word does not have to be distorted to cause deep hurt and damage. When a religious teacher proclaims the word of God without clothing what they are teaching with love, compassion, grace and mercy it becomes cold and legalistic and rather than bring life brings hurt and a sense of unworthiness.

**Confusion:** many have been raised amongst much false teaching, but amongst the distortions there is often enough light and truth for them to find the Lord Jesus Christ, God's grace and eternal life. This is the wonder and glory of God working upon an honest heart seeking after him despite the various distortions. Following are two reasons Christians can fall when this type of confusion and distortion exists:

1. Because the distorted teaching they have been taught do not harmonize with real life and they are left spiritually confused.
2. What they have been taught does not produce spiritual life and joy within nor surround their mind and heart with the love and the grace of God in Christ and in this sense, they are left spiritually lacking.

**Weakness of the flesh:** when we come to Christ we are all spiritual infants in the Lord, not one of us has perfect wisdom, perfect knowledge or perfect surrender, we all come from different cultures and nations with past baggage, emotional hurts, different levels of education (especially

religious) and different world-views and mindsets. Some fall because of their love for a partner or for the temptation of fame or success in life and such like things. The difference between those that fall because of hurt, confusion or the weakness of the flesh and between those Peter has focused on in this chapter is that those who fall because of hurt, confusion or the weakness of the flesh:

1. Are not turned from their faith for any personal gain.
2. Are not twisting and distorting the Gospel for their own selfish ambition.
3. Are not using God's people for their own gain.

For all who fit into anyone of these groups there is a most likely chance they will return to the faith at some time in the future and should they do so God will welcome them with open arms full of love. These people fit into the category of the prodigal son who forsook God to indulge his life in worldly and wasteful living, yet when he eventually came to his senses he returned to his father and his father was so excited to see his lost son returning home he raced out to meet him. This is the love and grace of God every brother and sister should have dwelling in their hearts. In contrast to these people Peter's entire focus has been on false teachers who twist and distort the Scriptures so they can use them to their own advantage and extend their own religious empire, by taking advantage of those seeking God, who sit under their ministry. They have absolutely no integrity toward God or toward those they teach.

**SUMMARY:** the entire chapter is about religious human hypocritical false teachers (not evil supernatural angels) who use their privileged positions for their own gain. Peter is contrasting the righteous with the unrighteous. Angels (meaning messengers) in this context refers to men who because of their great authority and gifts had the potential to be great men of God, but instead use their privilege positions and talents for their own advantage and gain. This is why in other Scriptures they are called "The devil's angels" which is a title that refers to men called of God to preach the Lord Jesus Christ, but through greed and covertness twist and distort the Scriptures leading many astray. In this manner they become evil and corrupt servants of God and because of this gross wickedness are rightly given the title, "The devils angels" and evil ministers appearing as angels of light.

(The book of Jude has a very similar message).

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**For further information see the titles:**

- The Second or Great White Throne Judgment.
- In, Resurrection (ON WESITE MENU).
- Hell, in Death (ON WESITE MENU).

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*As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.*