

## Standing in the True Knowledge of Christ

# “False Teachers Among You”

## *The Danger Within*

### 2 Peter 2:1-3

In chapter 1, we studied:

- The Provision of Grace (1:1–4) → God has supplied everything
- The Progress of Growth (1:5–7) → We are to diligently grow
- The Proof of Maturity (1:8–11) → Growth produces stability
- The Preservation of Truth (1:12–21) → Truth must be continually reinforced

The question we can draw from there is, “*Why is all of that so necessary?*” The answer is given in our text: Because false teachers are not coming — they are already among you.

There is a shift in tone that begins in chapter 2. In chapter 1, the tone was encouraging, foundational, and stabilizing. In chapter 2, it changes to warning, exposing, and confrontational. Peter moves from “grow in truth” to “guard against error.”

The central theme of the passage is that false teaching is not simply mistaken or misunderstood doctrine. It is a destructive deception that arises from within. It is already inside the body, appearing legitimate, but spiritually dangerous.

#### I. THE PRESENCE OF FALSE TEACHERS (V. 1A)

(They are “among you.”)

## A. The pattern from the past

“But there were false prophets also among the people”

False teachers are not new — they are recurring (Deut. 13; Jer. 23)

## B. The parallel in the present

“Even as there shall be false teachers among you”

1. “Shall be” — certainty, not possibility
2. “Among you” — internal danger
3. The greatest threats to the church are not always external persecution, but internal corruption.

Matthew 7:15

<sup>15</sup> Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

Acts 20:29–30

<sup>29</sup> For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. <sup>30</sup> Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

## C. The subtlety of their entrance

“Who privily shall bring in...”

1. “Privily” (παρεισάγω – only time in the New Testament) — means to bring in secretly. In applied use here, it means to smuggle in alongside truth.
2. They don't deny everything — they mix error

with truth.

3. False teaching almost always arrives gradually.

## II. THE PRACTICE OF FALSE TEACHERS (v. 1B-2)

(They corrupt the truth)

### A. Their doctrine is destructive

“Damnable heresies”

1. This phrase (αἱρέσεις ἀπωλείας) literally interprets as “heresies of damnation.” That is, heresies that will be followed by destruction.
2. This is not harmless difference of opinion or interpretation. This is eternally dangerous error.

### B. Their denial is deliberate

“Even denying the Lord that bought them”

1. “Denying” (ἀρνούμενοι) — to reject or disown
2. It’s not always verbal denial, but doctrinal contradiction.
3. This denial doesn’t require true salvation — it doesn’t mean they were saved and then lost their salvation. This points to professed association with Christ.

Titus 1:10–11

<sup>10</sup> For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: <sup>11</sup> Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake.

Titus 1:16

<sup>16</sup> They profess that they know God; but in works they deny *him*, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.

### C. Their end will be self-destructive

“And bring upon themselves swift destruction”

#### 1. The certainty of their end

“Bring upon themselves” — they are responsible for this judgment.

#### 2. The consistency of their end

“Swift destruction” (ties back to “damnable heresies” – same root word) — the destruction they teach becomes the destruction they receive.

#### 3. The suddenness of their end

“Swift” (ταχινή) — sudden, decisive, unavoidable. Not necessarily immediate, but certain and overwhelming.

#### Proverbs 29:1

<sup>1</sup> He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth *his* neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.

#### 1 Thessalonians 5:3

<sup>3</sup> For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

#### 4. The warning of their end

This is directed primarily at the false teachers, but it serves as a warning to all who would follow them.

### D. Their influence is widespread

“And many shall follow their pernicious ways”

1. “Pernicious ways” (ἀπώλεια) — same word translated as “destruction” and “damnable” in the previous verse. It means to destroy fully.
2. The English word “pernicious” is a Latin term meaning “to kill,” or “death.” Literally, having the quality of killing, destroying, or injuring.
3. The Bishop’s Bible reads, “*And many shall follow their damnable ways...*” The Geneva Bible, “*And many shall follow their destructions...*”
4. Simply put, following false doctrines destroys.

#### **E. Their impact is dishonoring**

“By reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of”

1. The world blasphemes truth because of false professors.
2. False teachers don’t just harm followers — they damage the testimony of the Gospel.

### **III. THE PROFIT OF FALSE TEACHERS (v. 3A)**

(They use people)

#### **A. Their motivation is covetousness**

“And through covetousness”

1. “Covetousness” (πλεονεξία) — greed, desire for more

Isaiah 56:11

<sup>11</sup> Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have

enough, and they *are* shepherds *that* cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter.

#### Jeremiah 6:13

<sup>13</sup> For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one *is* given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely.

#### Romans 16:17–18

<sup>17</sup> Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. <sup>18</sup> For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

2. Not just speaking of money, but also of power, influence, and control.

### B. Their motivation is manipulation

“With feigned words”

1. “Feigned words” (πλαστοίς λόγοις) — fabricated, molded words

#### 1 Thessalonians 2:5

<sup>5</sup> For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God *is* witness:

2. They craft their message to appeal — not to convict.

### C. Their ministry is exploitative

“Make merchandise of you”

1. “Merchandise” (ἐμπορεύομαι) — to trade

(translated “buy and sell” in James 4:3) — this isn’t necessarily a negative word, but as it is used here, it is.

2. The “merchandise” they were peddling were the people they were misleading.
3. Any “ministry” that uses people rather than serves them is spiritually dangerous.

#### IV. THE JUDGMENT OF FALSE TEACHERS (V. 3B)

(They will not escape)

##### A. Judgment is certain

“Whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not”

It may seem delayed at times — many today seem to be successful and “getting away with it” — but their judgment is not inactive. It will come.

##### B. Destruction is sure

“Their damnation slumbereth not”

God is not indifferent to false teaching.

[Deuteronomy 32:35](#)

<sup>35</sup> To me *belongeth* vengeance, and recompence; their foot shall slide in *due* time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste.

[Romans 2:5–6](#)

<sup>5</sup> But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; <sup>6</sup> Who will render to every man according to his deeds:

Conclusion:

As we saw in chapter 1: true knowledge produces growth, fruitfulness, and stability.

In this text, false knowledge produces deception, corruption, and destruction.

As stated in our study of 2 Pet. 1:8-11: true knowledge of Christ produces transformation — not just information.

The practical application we can draw from our study of these 3 verses is simple:

- Be discerning
  - Not every teacher is safe
  - Test doctrine by Scripture

Acts 17:11

<sup>11</sup> These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

- Be grounded
  - Stability comes from growth (1:5-7)
  - Weak believers are vulnerable believers
- Be watchful
  - Error often enters subtly
  - Guard what you have been taught

2 Timothy 4:3-4

<sup>3</sup> For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; <sup>4</sup> And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

- Be anchored in Christ

- The issue is not just doctrine — it is relationship with Christ
- “Denying the Lord” is the root issue

The danger then, and the danger now, is not merely that false teachers exist, but that they exist “among you.”

The safeguard against these false teachers and their false teaching is not to follow a man but “Standing in the true knowledge of Christ.”

The question then becomes:

- Am I growing in the truth?
- Am I grounded enough to recognize error?
- Am I being shaped by Scripture — or influenced by voices around me?