

2 Peter 2:1-22

Lesson 3

This next section serves many purposes and is very interesting for a number of different reasons: 1. It serves as a transition and connecting point between what goes before and what will follow. 2. It is going to connect apostles and prophets, false-prophets and false teachers. 3. It is also of interest because much that follows bears remarkable similarity to Jude, while at the same time it contains notable differences. As you might expect the similarities as well as the differences have generated a considerable amount of discussion.

Some of these issues will be addressed in the discussion that follows with the verses, however the issue of the similarities and differences is perhaps one that will be best to discuss here at the start. Many scholars hold the view that the similarities between Jude and Second Peter are the result of Second Peter borrowing directly from Jude. This still leaves open a great many questions such as why

did he borrow this and leave that out and why does he elaborate here while condensing there.¹ One of the problems with the theories of dependence is there appears to no absolute agreement amongst those that hold such a views.

Fredenburg gives a careful and thorough analysis of the variety of views in his thesis and suggests a very viable alternative view to the one that indicates Peter borrowed from Jude. His suggestion is that they share a common source for the their material in the form of an oral *Midrash*. *Midrash* is basically an edifying and explanitory genre of literature that is very closely tied to Scripture. Its primary function is to show the full import of the work of God.

Secondarily, it provides an amplification of the text often in

¹ Richard B. Vinson, Richard F. Wilson, and Watson E. Mills, *1 & 2 Peter, Jude*, in the Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary (Macon GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2010), pp. 327-328. Lewis R. Donelson, *I & II Peter and Jude A Commentary*, in The New Testament Library commentary series (Louisville KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), p. 236. Jerome H. Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, in The Anchor Bible series, Vol. 37C (New Haven CN: Yale University Press, 2004), pp. 120-122. Peter H. Davids, *II Peter and Jude A Handbook on the Greek Text*, in the Baylor Handbook on the New Testament series (Waco TX: Baylor University Press, 2011), pp. xviii-xxi. Richard J. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, in the Word Biblical Commentary Series, vol. 50 (Waco TX: Word Books, Publisher, 1983), pp. 141-143.

a very colorful fashion that will provide additional information.²

The view that Peter and Jude used a common oral tradition explains both the similarities between the texts and the differences and though it is based upon an oral text that no longer is demonstrable it is both logical and more objective in nature than the rather subjective theories that have been posited upon borrowing of Peter from the text of Jude. You may ask, what difference does it make? This makes a difference for several reasons: 1. We live in a time when there is a distinct lack of trust when something is not written. The first century was not such a time; In that time often those texts and items that were most sacred and where the desire was to protect them the most, these things were passed on only orally.³ 2. This removes some of the objections for Second Peter being written earlier rather than later and also perhaps some of the theories that

² Brandon L. Fredenburg, *A Critical Introduction to the Epistle of Jude*, A Thesis Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate Department in Bible Studies at David Lipscomb University, November 1989, pp. 42-77.

³ Eduard Nielsen, *Oral Tradition*, in the Studies in Biblical Theology Series, No. 11 (Chicago IL: Alec R. Allenson, Inc., 1955), pp. 18-38.

propose that the same author wrote both documents. 3. It perhaps indicates that the problems addressed in Jude and Second Peter were widespread and common in this time and locale and that the common problems were answered in a very similar fashion by a variety of people.

2¹ Ἐγένοντο δὲ καὶ ψευδοπροφῆται ἐν τῷ λαῷ, ὡς καὶ ἐν ὑμῖν ἔσονται ψευδοδιδάσκαλοι, οἵτινες παρεισάξουσιν αἰρέσεις ἀπωλείας καὶ τὸν ἀγοράσαντα αὐτοὺς δεσπότην ἀρνούμενοι. ἐπάγοντες ἑαυτοῖς ταχινήν ἀπώλειαν,

2¹ But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will bring in destructive heresies. They will even deny the Master who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves.

The stories of ancient Israel are filled with false prophets (ψευδοπροφῆται), even though the word is rare in the Septuagint (cf. Jeremiah 6:13; Zechariah 13:2. The classic definition of a false prophet comes from Deuteronomy 18:20 “But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in my name that I have not commanded him

to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that same prophet shall die.”⁴ Early Christian literature is also filled with warnings about false prophets that will rise up in Christian communities (e.g. Matthew 24:11, 24; Mark 13:22; 1 John 4:1; Revelation 16:13; 19:20; 20:10; *Didache* 16:3).⁵

By making the comparison between the false prophets of the Old Testament and contemporary false teachers the author evokes the biblical tradition about them. Jeremiah’s description of the false prophets from his era contained three elements: 1. Their message contradicted his message, while he cried out for repentance and warned of judgment the false prophets promised “peace” (Jeremiah 4:10; 6:14; 14:13; 23:17; 27:9, 16 ff.). 2. Only true prophets were authorized by God those that are false prophets have no such authority 3. When false prophets are accused of being false Jeremiah conducts a lawsuit against them condemning them. False prophets

⁴ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. 2001 (Dt 18:20). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

⁵ Lewis R. Donelson, *I & II Peter and Jude A Commentary*, in *The New Testament Library commentary series* (Louisville KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), p. 237.

speak on their own authority, not God's, they preach freedom from fear and judgment, but they are condemned as speaking from themselves and not from God.⁶

Among the defamatory trends used in antiquity, that of highlighting "hypocrisy and falseness," is one of the most poignant, according to Du Toit.⁷ The "false prophet" is one example of this type of denigration, and Peter draws upon the image of the "false prophet" to develop and heighten the tension within the text in order to highlight the seriousness of the danger faced from attacks that have originated from within the church itself. Peter perceived there to be problems in the message that some inside the church were proclaiming. In a similar manner that "false prophets" were perceived as being in conflict with the true prophets of God in ancient Israel, the mission of the "false teachers" in the Second Peter was to lead the people of the church away from God.

⁶ Jerome H. Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, p. 190.

⁷ Du Toit, "Vilification as a Pragmatic Device in Early Christian Epistolography," pp. 404-405.

Peter uses a common technique that takes characterizations of the past enemies of Israel in order to intensify the impact his message would have upon his audience. Vilifying one's opponent was a useful weapon in the arsenal of skilled rhetoricians in the period of the first century A.D. and even before.⁸ By using characters from Israel's past, Peter is able to set in context the serious nature of the situation that now faces the church. The signs and miracles performed by the "false prophet" of Revelation 19:20 were enacted in order to deceive the church, if that were possible.

These destructive heresies are not only unacceptable they represent something that is the antithesis of the church. The great seriousness with which heresy is taken by Peter consists in the fact that heresy (αἰρέσεις) affects the foundation of the Church in its very doctrine, and they do so in such a fundamental way as to give rise to a new society alongside the church (ἐκκλησία). This the Church

⁸ Andrie Du Toit, "Vilification as a Pragmatic Device in Early Christian Epistolography," *Biblica* 75 (1994): pp. 403-412. As Balaam is vilified in *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*, as Rome is in the context of the Dead Sea Scrolls (cf. note 18,) and as Haman is at the festival of Purim.

cannot accept, since as the lawful public assembly of the whole people of God the Church embraces this people exclusively and comprehensively. By its very nature, however, heresy (αἵρεσις) is a private magnitude with a limited validity. It is, in fact, a school, party or sect. If the Church accedes to heresy (αἰρέσεις), it will itself become a heresy (αἵρεσις) and thus destroy its comprehensive claim.⁹

What Peter is fighting for is nothing short of the church itself. He is going to be fierce in his defense of the foundation that has already been laid by the apostolic teachings from him and those like him. He indicates here something of the nature of those teachings: “they deny the master who bought them.” This denial will bring on them the consequence of their “swift destruction.” This destruction is the natural consequence of their actions and is indicative of self-destruction. The phrase “swift destruction” is not a temporal reference but an eschatological one. The element that runs through their

⁹ *Theological dictionary of the New Testament*. 1964- (G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley & G. Friedrich, Ed.) (electronic ed.). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

teaching though is this element of destruction, first for the fabric of the church itself, but ultimately for those that deny the judgment.¹⁰

2 καὶ πολλοὶ ἑξακολουθήσουσιν αὐτῶν ταῖς ἀσελγείαις δι' οὓς ἡ ὁδὸς τῆς ἀληθείας βλασφημηθήσεται,

² Even so, many will follow their licentious ways, and because of these teachers the way of truth will be maligned.

In this verse Peter indicates more about the nature of their practices. The phrase “licentious ways” is indicative of sensual indulgence and is especially used of sexual immorality. They are teaching that there is no judgment and therefore there is no reason not to enjoy what this life has to offer. Because of this behavior “the way of truth will be maligned.” This verse alludes to Isaiah 52:5 from the Septuagint which speaks of the blasphemy of the nations or Gentiles.¹¹ The concern here is that the gospel will be

¹⁰ Richard B. Vinson, Richard F. Wilson, and Watson E. Mills, *1 & 2 Peter, Jude*, p. 329.

¹¹ Richard J. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, pp. 241-242.

maligned because the behavior of these people is such that it unacceptable even to those outside the church.

3 καὶ ἐν πλεονεξίᾳ πλαστοῖς λόγοις ὑμᾶς ἐμπορεύσονται, οἷς τὸ κρίμα ἔκπαλαι οὐκ ἄργεῖ καὶ ἡ ἀπώλεια αὐτῶν οὐ νυστάζει.

³ And in their greed they will exploit you with deceptive words. Their condemnation, pronounced against them long ago, has not been idle, and their destruction is not asleep.

The meaning here in the first part of this verse is that the false teachers are making a good profit from their followers. It is of interest here that Peter does not just refer to these villains as “false-prophets,” but there may be an indication that they are not claiming any special powers or sources for their teachings other than human reason. The second part of this verse perhaps reflects the mocking charge by the “false teachers” that the prophecies of the Old Testament have not been fulfilled and therefore they are idle words. Peter does not clearly define what he means by “Their condemnation, pronounced against them long

ago,....” It is likely that Peter links them in this instance with the false-prophets even though they would not do this themselves. This would then mean that the Old Testament scriptures which indicate the destruction of false-prophets include these false-teachers as well.¹²

4 Εἰ γὰρ ὁ θεὸς ἀγγέλων ἀμαρτησάντων οὐκ ἐφείσατο ἀλλὰ
σειραῖς ζόφου ταρταρώσας παρέδωκεν εἰς κρίσιν
τηρουμένους,

**4 For if God did not spare the angels when they sinned,
but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of
deepest darkness to be kept until the judgment;**

The reference here is most likely to Genesis 6:1-4 which is also recounted and expanded in a number of other early Jewish texts such as *1 Enoch*. There appears to be a reliance, by Peter, upon at least the stories that we have recorded in *1 Enoch* which refer to the angels being bound in chains. The word (ταρταρώ) “hell” used here is very different from the word “hades” that is so often spoken of as “hell” by many people.

¹² Richard J. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, pp. 243-248.

This word was used by the Greeks to designate the place where the Titans were imprisoned in the early Greek theogonic myths. These were the ancient giants, the Cyclopes and the Titans that were imprisoned in the lowest part of the underworld by Uranos, Kronos and Zeus. This word is not used in the Greek version of 1 Enoch though a similar one is. This term is used of the place of divine punishment elsewhere in Jewish Greek literature (the Septuagint of Job 40:20; 41:24; Proverbs 30:16; the *Sibylline Oracles* 4.186; Philo, *Moses* 2.433). Hellenistic Jews were certainly aware that the Greek myth of the Titans had some similarities to the fall of the Watchers (Genesis 6:1-4; though Philo rejects any comparison *Gigantes* 58).¹³

Sometimes the sons of the Watchers (sons of God) the Nephilim (giants) are compared to the Titans (Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 1.73; cf. the Septuagint text of Ezekiel 32:27; Sirach 16:7), but in Judith 16:6 the Watchers themselves seem to be referred to as Titans.¹⁴ In using this

¹³ Richard J. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, p. 249.

¹⁴ **For their mighty one did not fall by the hands of the young men,**

term for “hell” here Peter is following Hellenistic Jewish practice.¹⁵

5 καὶ ἀρχαίου κόσμου οὐκ ἐφείσατο ἀλλὰ ὄγδοον Νῶε
δικαιοσύνης κήρυκα ἐφύλαξεν κατακλυσμὸν κόσμῳ
ἀσεβῶν ἐπάξας,

**⁵ and if he did not spare the ancient world, even though
he saved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven
others, when he brought a flood on a world of the
ungodly;**

Peter continues bringing up examples of past judgment as he continues to build his case against the “false teachers.”

6 καὶ πόλεις Σοδόμων καὶ Γομόρρας τεφρώσας
[καταστροφῆ] κατέκρινεν ὑπόδειγμα μελλόντων
ἀσεβέ[σ]ιν τεθεικῶς,

**nor did the sons of the Titans strike him down,
nor did tall giants set upon him;
but Judith daughter of Merari
with the beauty of her countenance undid him.**

¹⁵ Richard J. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, p. 249.

6 and if by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes he condemned them to extinction and made them an example of what is coming to the ungodly;

This verse marks a continuation of the long sentence and indicates that just as judgment has come on all these, and in all these times, judgment will come to the “ungodly.”

7 καὶ δίκαιον Λὼτ καταπονούμενον ὑπὸ τῆς τῶν ἀθέσμων ἐν ἀσελείᾳ ἀναστροφῆς ἐρρύσατο·

7 and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man greatly distressed by the licentiousness of the lawless

He now begins to lay out the way to avoid the terrible prospect of the judgment of God using the example of Lot. The Genesis story does not claim that Lot was righteous but an inference can be made from the discussion that Abraham has with God that this is the reason that he was saved from the destruction that befell Sodom and Gomorrah.¹⁶

¹⁶ Richard B. Vinson, Richard F. Wilson, and Watson E. Mills, *1 & 2 Peter, Jude*, pp. 335-336.

8 βλέματι γὰρ καὶ ἀκοῇ ὁ δίκαιος ἐγκατοικῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς
ἡμέραν ἐξ ἡμέρας ψυχὴν δικαίαν ἀνόμοις ἔργοις
ἐβασάνιζεν·

**8 (for that righteous man, living among them day after
day, was tormented in his righteous soul by their
lawless deeds that he saw and heard),**

The account here is meant to create a bond of recognition between the people Peter is addressing and the situation with Lot. The idea is that both are distressed by the sinfulness that is happening around them; as a matter of fact they live in torment because of this sinfulness. This distress in the face of being surrounded by sinfulness is one of the marks of righteousness.

9 οἶδεν κύριος εὐσεβεῖς ἐκ πειρασμοῦ ῥύεσθαι, ἀδίκους δὲ
εἰς ἡμέραν κρίσεως κολαζομένους τηρεῖν,

**9 then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from
trial, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment
until the day of judgment**

Finally in this sentence the apodosis of the conditional sentence that began at 2:4 finally arrives. All of the “if”

clauses have now lead to this point of conclusion. The conclusion is that God knows how to save and he also knows how to punish. This is a contrast with Jude where the focus is upon the aspect of punishment; there is a balance here. The focus here is not merely upon eschatological salvation, but also on salvation from “trials.”¹⁷

10 μάλιστα δὲ τοὺς ὀπίσω σαρκὸς ἐν ἐπιθυμίᾳ μiasμοῦ πορευομένους καὶ κυριότητος καταφρονοῦντας.

Τολμηταὶ ἀυθάδεις, δόξας οὐ τρέμουσιν βλασφημοῦντες,

10 —especially those who indulge their flesh in depraved lust, and who despise authority.

Bold and willful, they are not afraid to slander the glorious ones,

This verse expounds on the charges that Peter makes against those that are in opposition to what is the apostolic message. It is perhaps not surprising that “indulgence” of the flesh is mentioned, along with despising authority and being bold and willful. What does stand out here is this

¹⁷ Lewis R. Donelson, *I & II Peter and Jude A Commentary*, pp. 245-246.

“slander” of “the glorious ones.” It is likely that this is reference here to “angels,” or perhaps “fallen angels.” Peter is accusing them of slandering that which is greater and more powerful than they are. An arrogant ignorance is implied in this slander.

11 ὅπου ἄγγελοι ἰσχύϊ καὶ δυνάμει μείζονες ὄντες οὐ φέρουσιν κατ’ αὐτῶν παρὰ κυρίου βλάσφημον κρίσιν.

11 whereas angels, though greater in might and power, do not bring against them a slanderous judgment from the Lord.

He then goes on to speak of the angels of God, who are not rebellious, and far more powerful than these people taking great care not to be slanderous in any accusation that they make: This despite even having the authority of God standing behind them.

12 οὗτοι δὲ ὡς ἄλογα ζῶα γεγεννημένα φυσικὰ εἰς ἄλωσιν καὶ φθορὰν ἐν οἷς ἀγνοοῦσιν βλασφημοῦντες, ἐν τῇ φθορᾷ αὐτῶν καὶ φθαρήσονται

12 These people, however, are like irrational animals, mere creatures of instinct, born to be caught and killed.

They slander what they do not understand, and when those creatures are destroyed, they also will be destroyed,

The comparison is now between such people and “irrational animals” that act based on instinct rather than upon rational thought. The indication is that their purpose is to be caught and killed, as one would catch an animal. By their irrational actions they have now united themselves with that which they slander and await the prospect of destruction. Peter here dehumanizes them. Peter is not calling upon his audience to persecute or destroy this people at all, but he is calling upon his audience to recognize that their destiny is to be destroyed along with the angels that rebelled against God. The nature of this destruction will be detailed more as this text continues.

13 ἀδικούμενοι μισθὸν ἀδικίας, ἡδονὴν ἡγούμενοι τὴν ἐν ἡμέρᾳ τρυφήν, σπίλοι καὶ μῶμοι ἐντρυφῶντες ἐν ταῖς ἀπάταις αὐτῶν συνευωχούμενοι ὑμῖν,

13 suffering the penalty for doing wrong. They count it a pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are blots and

blemishes, reveling in their dissipation while they feast with you.

These next two verses make clear what has been assumed all along and that is that these “false teachers” are indeed participants in the life of this community. They are hedonistic in their behavior, openly, right in the midst of this community. They not only share the table with this community they revel in their shameful behavior right in the midst of community.¹⁸

14 ὄφθαλμοὺς ἔχοντες μεστοὺς μοιχαλίδος καὶ
ἀκαταπαύστους ἀμαρτίας, δελεάζοντες ψυχὰς
ἀστηρίκτους, καρδίαν γεγυμνασμένην πλεονεξίας ἔχοντες,
κατάρας τέκνα·

¹⁴ They have eyes full of adultery, insatiable for sin. They entice unsteady souls. They have hearts trained in greed. Accursed children!

The accusations continue to unfold as not only do they seek opportunities to sin themselves but they also

¹⁸ Richard B. Vinson, Richard F. Wilson, and Watson E. Mills, *1 & 2 Peter, Jude*, p. 338.

“entice” others. Their hearts are trained in greed. They seek to involve others in their shameful behavior. Peter as a faithful apostle and father in the church of Jesus Christ ends this section with an acclamation indicating the destiny and nature of those he has just described.

15 καταλείποντες εὐθεΐαν ὁδὸν ἐπλανήθησαν,
ἐξακολουθήσαντες τῇ ὁδῷ τοῦ Βαλαὰμ τοῦ Βοσόρ, ὃς
μισθὸν ἀδικίας ἠγάπησεν

**15 They have left the straight road and have gone astray,
following the road of Balaam son of Bosor, who loved
the wages of doing wrong,**

Peter now seeks another way to describe the folly that these people have embarked upon by comparing them with one of Israel’s famous villains this indicates the charges against them in a manner that will also have indicated the outcome that they can expect. Balaam is an interesting character within Jewish tradition being on one side the only Gentile prophet to deliver a prophecy concerning the Messiah. On the other side he is condemned as a greedy person who brings evil into the midst of the people of God.

This makes him a very appropriate example for Peter to use here as this is exactly the accusation that Peter is making against these “false teachers.”

16 ἔλεγξιν δὲ ἔσχεν ἰδίας παρανομίας· ὑποζύγιον ἄφωνον ἐν ἀνθρώπου φωνῇ φθεγξάμενον ἐκώλυσεν τὴν τοῦ προφήτου παραφρονίαν.

16 but was rebuked for his own transgression; a speechless donkey spoke with a human voice and restrained the prophet’s madness.

Balaam was restrained from his madness by an irrational animal who appears to have known better what was about to happen than did Balaam.

17 Οὗτοί εἰσιν πηγαὶ ἄνυδροι καὶ ὀμίχλαι ὑπὸ λαίλαπος ἐλαυνόμεναι, οἷς ὁ ζόφος τοῦ σκότους τετήρηται.

17 These are waterless springs and mists driven by a storm; for them the deepest darkness has been reserved.

Peter now turns very dark in his description of the true attributes of these “false teachers.” He moves on to the consequences that will befall them. This language continues

to be grim, indicating that the ultimate destiny of such people is to be the same as it is for the angels who rebelled against God.

18 ὑπέρογκα γὰρ ματαιότητος φθεγγόμενοι δελεάζουσιν ἐν ἐπιθυμίαις σαρκὸς ἀσελγείαις τοὺς ὀλίγως ἀποφεύγοντας τοὺς ἐν πλάνῃ ἀναστρεφόμενους,

18 For they speak bombastic nonsense, and with licentious desires of the flesh they entice people who have just escaped from those who live in error.

They make grand promises using high sounding words while all the while their words are in reality “nonsense.” They entice recent converts using the desires of the flesh to return once again to the error from which they have only recently escaped.

19 ἐλευθερίαν αὐτοῖς ἐπαγγελλούμενοι, αὐτοὶ δοῦλοι ὑπάρχοντες τῆς φθορᾶς· ᾧ γὰρ τις ἠττηται, τούτῳ δεδούλωται.

19 They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption; for people are slaves to whatever masters them.

They do all of this with promises of freedom while all the while they are slaves of that which masters them; their master is “corruption” or “decay.”

20 εἰ γὰρ ἀποφυγόντες τὰ μιάσματα τοῦ κόσμου ἐν ἐπιγνώσει τοῦ κυρίου [ἡμῶν] καὶ σωτῆρος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, τούτοις δὲ πάλιν ἐμπλακέντες ἡττῶνται, γέγονεν αὐτοῖς τὰ ἔσχατα χείρονα τῶν πρώτων.

20 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 overpowered, the last state has become worse for them than the first.

This verse for many seems to represent an impossible puzzle, but Peter seems to speak just as plainly and clearly here as he does elsewhere. Peter indicates that he firmly believes that the false teachers have indeed tasted of the saving power of Jesus Christ and they have departed from it.¹⁹ This is both one of the most frightening and at the same

¹⁹ Richard B. Vinson, Richard F. Wilson, and Watson E. Mills, *1 & 2 Peter, Jude*, pp. 340-341.

time challenging sections in Scripture. It is frightening because it absolutely goes against the Reformation doctrine of “once saved always saved.” It indicates that a continual vigilance is necessary to avoid leaving the place of safety afforded by the Gospel. They have become “entangled” in the “defilements of the world” and now they are worse off than they were before they accepted the gospel.

21 κρεῖττον γὰρ ἦν αὐτοῖς μὴ ἐπεγνωκέναι τὴν ὁδὸν τῆς δικαιοσύνης ἢ ἐπιγνοῦσιν ὑποστρέψαι ἐκ τῆς παραδοθείσης αὐτοῖς ἀγίας ἐντολῆς.

21 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 that was passed on to them.

Their state now is far worse than it is for one who never knew “the way of righteousness.” They knew the “holy commandment” that was passed onto them through the apostolic message and they have turned from it.

22 συμβέβηκεν αὐτοῖς τὸ τῆς ἀληθοῦς παροιμίας, Κύων ἐπιστρέψας ἐπὶ τὸ ἴδιον ἐξέραμα,

καί,

Ἵς λουσαμένη εἰς κυλισμὸν βορβόρου.²⁰

²² It has happened to them according to the true proverb,

“The dog turns back to its own vomit,”

and,

“The sow is washed only to wallow in the mud.”²¹

Peter now applies these proverbs to the false teachers both as an illustration of their apostasy and as a return to the state of sinfulness that they had before they encountered the conversional knowledge of Jesus Christ.²²

Synopsis

In this chapter Peter warns his audience that they can expect to have false-teachers in their midst. These false-teachers correspond to the false prophets that plagued the people of Israel throughout their history. They will deny

²⁰ Aland, K., Black, M., Martini, C. M., Metzger, B. M., Robinson, M., & Wikgren, A. (1993; 2006). *The Greek New Testament, Fourth Revised Edition (with Morphology)* (2 Pe 2). Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft.

²¹ *The Holy Bible : New Revised Standard Version*. 1989 (2 Pe 2:1–3:2). Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

²² Richard B. Vinson, Richard F. Wilson, and Watson E. Mills, *1 & 2 Peter, Jude*, p. 341.

the heart of the gospel message and will bring swift destruction upon themselves. Despite the warnings Peter predicts that many will follow them and that the work of the church will be damaged. He gives them some indications as to how these false teachers may be recognized and indicates their deceitful methodologies.

He informs his audience of the fact that they will fall under the judgment of God and the righteous can expect to be preserved by God. He notes that the depravity that will be the signature of this group of people will be their indulgence of the flesh and the fact that they boldly defy authority in a manner that is willful and slanderous of things that should not be slandered. They will demonstrate animalistic, instinctual behavior that indicates their true nature and predicts their destruction.

His warnings come to protect the people of God from this very real danger to their eternal salvation. Peter indicates that these people were once true participants in the salvation offered through Jesus Christ but have now become entangled in the world once again. This returning

to their former state puts them in a far worse state than end before they began following the way of the gospel.

Main Points

- 1. False Teachers are among the people of the church.**
- 2. God will punish the unrighteous and save the righteous.**
- 3. The false teachers were at one time recipients of salvation but forfeited that salvation for the entanglements of the world.**