



2:1-10

Over the Thanksgiving holiday, I had a conversation with my best friend growing up named Byron. We were discussing whether or not Jesus is the only way to heaven. He concluded if everyone's going to hell but Christians, he doesn't want to have anything to do with my God. The implication of course is that God would not be just. People are doing the best they can he said....and to condemn someone to hell because they don't believe in Jesus is just wrong. But Byron I say, that is what the Bible teaches. He concludes, the Bible is a book written by man, not God.

But as we studied last week, Peter says precisely the opposite at the end of chapter 1. He says "knowing this first of all; that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." Peter's point is simple, yet clear. What you read about in Scripture is not a matter of the author's opinion; instead God inspired them to write down just what he wanted them to in Scripture. This brings us to where we begin today.

Peter says the OT prophets were inspired of God. The reason they were inspired was because there were false prophets who were making claims that did not line up with the Scriptures. Peter's point is simple: Just as there were prophets who were inspired by God—so there were others who weren't. In the NT church, he says there are also two types of teachers, good teachers and false ones. Here's what he says.

But false prophets (Contrasting those with the good prophets inspired by God) 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.

So today we are going to talk about false teachers. In this section Peter mentions several characteristics that are common with many false teachers. Here is the first.

1. False Teachers originate from the church

Peter says, "There will be false teachers among you, who will bring destructive heresies, even denying the Master, a.k.a. Jesus. I think it is quite interesting that when you study church history—study the councils—you find that the early heresies that were condemned were introduced by Bishops who were leading their regional church. In fact, even the denominational splits we see today were the result of Christians within the church disagreeing over certain issues, like spiritual gifts, baptism, election, and the

day of worship to name a few. You rarely have outsiders wreak havoc in the church; havoc most often is reserved for those within the church walls. The church is the womb for false teachers. Typically, false teachers start out good—but when they gain a following—they become bigger than the Bible. Their focus gets shifted from Jesus to building up their own ministries. Their ministry is about themselves.

2. False Teachers have Destructive Doctrines

One man that comes to mind is Jim Jones. He started around the 1970's in the church and was a tremendous asset to it. Jones in many ways broke the color barrier within the church. He adopted an African American son and worked hard to have a church that was integrated with many nationalities. Heaven is not going to be all white people. All black people. All yellow people, etc, he reasoned. Heaven is going to be a diverse place where you will rub shoulders with brothers and sisters from all different ethnic backgrounds. Jones recognized this and was a ground breaker for when it came to integration within the church. In fact, one of the things that disheartens me today is that Sunday at church happens to be the biggest segregated event of the week. Want to know what segregation was like in the 1960's? Go to church!

But along the way, his ministry grew and his teaching became destructive. He wrote a book criticizing the Bible and saying that it was a book that justified white people as they oppressed the poor and preached slavery and segregation. He openly stated the Bible was not a book written by God. Eventually he told them that he was the [reincarnation](#) of [Jesus of Nazareth](#), [Mahatma Gandhi](#), [Buddha](#), [Vladimir Lenin](#), and [Father Divine](#). He used his power to break up marriages and father children with the separated wives. Finally, instead of blending with the community, he wanted to separate from it. He told his church that they needed to move far away from America because they were capitalist sinners. Many of you know he moved his congregation from San Francisco to Jonestown, Guiana. He had a congressman and his companions killed as they attempted to take fifteen of the Temple members home to America. Finally, knowing this would bring repercussions, he had 903 people take their lives by drinking deadly cyanide. The largest American, mass suicide ever! 276 of those killed were children, whom he had take the cyanide first, so the rest of the adults would be more encouraged to follow suit. Peter says there will be false teachers in the church who will come forth and bring destructive heresies. They start out good—but then become immersed in the power of their influence.

3. False Teachers tend to Justify Sexuality

And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed.

So people the false teachers were promoting sexuality, apparently because they emphasized there is freedom in Christ. Do you want to cause a Christian to fall and become ineffective? Encourage them to engage in sexual activity outside of marriage. In fact, the one thing that keeps Christians or from those

exploring Christianity from being committed is they don't want to give up casual sex. One time when I ran a singles ministry in Portland we did a series on Christianity and Sex and I placed that title on the reader board. Unfortunately, on the bottom I also had put on the sign, "come join us." We had one of our biggest crowds that night filled with outsiders who were curious. Mention sex and Christianity in the same sentence and people are interested. The false teachers in the days of Peter knew this and used it to grow their influence.

When false teachers gain influence they have a tendency to give themselves license to explore sexuality. David Koresh, another false teacher, whose teaching led to a standoff between his church and the FBI knew this to be the case as well.

Koresh started off well as he sought to know Jesus and plug into his Seventh Day Adventist Church. Then he had a vision that he was to marry the pastor's young daughter. The pastor threw him out of the service. After Koresh still pursued the pastor's daughter, he eventually was thrown out the Seventh Day Adventist Church. He found a new church known as the Branch Davidians, who themselves had been excommunicated from the Seventh Day Adventists. As he grew in power there; he stopped preaching monogamy and started to preach polygamy—well not exactly. He told his congregation that they were to be monogamous; but it was okay for him to be a polygamous. And for some unknown reason to man—his congregation bought into that destructive teaching.

He eventually told them that he was entitled to have 140 wives, whom he divided up into 60 queens and 80 concubines. One of the hardest things for a false teacher is for them to be denied. If they have a large number of followers, some of them attractive young woman—the idea of not exploiting their position is often a struggle. The bigger the ministry the more of a challenge you will have when it come to pride and taking advantage of people.

John Piper, who has a huge ministry in Minnesota and the Internet, is currently on a Sabbatical because of what he described as excessive pride. Thankfully, he is godly enough to humble himself and work on himself. Most false teachers are wrapped up in their pride.

4. False Teachers are often Associated with Greed

And in their greed they will exploit you with false words. Their condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.

Jose Luis De Jesus Miranda is a 60 year old Hispanic native from Miami. He has four churches in Massachusetts and has millions of followers on his website, mostly of Hispanic origin. He not only proclaims to be God incarnate (a.k.a. Jesus), but he also has a 666 tattoo on his forearm and claims to be the antichrist. . But he also teaches three main doctrines.

1. The devil, hell, and sin are non-existent
2. Prayer is a waste of time

3. The 10 commandments are irrelevant

He tells his followers they should indulge in food, and luxury, including expensive “bling” and cars and sexual relations because sin does not exist. He has a six figure income, sports Rolexes, rolls with body guards, and has gorgeous women around him all the time.

Miranda breaks up people into two categories, the “chosen people of the earth” and the “evil” people on earth. While the chosen do bad things, they are immediately forgiven. One time Miranda was asked if he prays and he said “No, who am I going to pray to” implying that he himself is God.

Followers are mostly Hispanic blue collar workers and his emphasis on luxurious living and grace appeals to the hearts of his followers, mostly below poverty level. If you want to be a false teacher and attract followers just encourage them to be rich and have sexual relations anytime they choose. You will find a lot of people who like that form of Christianity.

So in a recap, Peter says these things about false teachers.

1. They originate in the church
2. They teach destructive doctrines
3. They tend to indulge themselves sexually
4. They are enamored with wealth.

I am sure there may be other false teachers who come to mind, but Peter ends this section by saying false teachers will not get away with it. They will reap what they sow and God will rescue those who are living righteous lives but are caught up in their lives.

For if 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; 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; 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; and if he rescued righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked (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); then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment, and especially those who indulge in the lust of defiling passion and despise authority.

In the end, we can trust the course of history with false teachers and the righteous who fall victim. God will judge them like the angels, the ancient world, Sodom and Gomorrah. He will not allow them to get away with it for an extended period of time.

He will also spare the righteous like Noah and Lot, and anyone who falls victim. Maybe you are one of those who fell prey to false teaching. Maybe you have a family member or no others who have. God will never forget. He is good.