

The Life and Letters of Peter

Lesson Fourteen: Watch out!

2:1 But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them--bringing swift destruction on themselves.

2 Many will follow their shameful ways and will bring the way of truth into disrepute.

3 In their greed these teachers will exploit you with stories they have made up. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping.

4 For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment;

5 if he did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others;

6 if he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by burning them to ashes, and made them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly;

7 and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by the filthy lives of lawless men

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

9 if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment.

10 This is especially true of those who follow the corrupt desire of the sinful nature and despise authority. Bold and arrogant, these men are not afraid to slander celestial beings;

11 yet even angels, although they are stronger and more powerful, do not bring slanderous accusations against such beings in the presence of the Lord.

12 But these men blaspheme in matters they do not understand. They are like brute beasts, creatures of instinct, born only to be caught and destroyed, and like beasts they too will perish.

13 They will be paid back with harm for the harm they have done. Their idea of pleasure is to carouse in broad daylight. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their pleasures while they feast with you.

14 With eyes full of adultery, they never stop sinning; they seduce the unstable; they are experts in greed--an accursed brood!

15 They have left the straight way and wandered off to follow the way of Balaam son of Beor, who loved the wages of wickedness.

16 But he was rebuked for his wrongdoing by a donkey--a beast without speech--who spoke with a man's voice and restrained the prophet's madness.

17 These men are springs without water and mists driven by a storm. Blackest darkness is reserved for them.

18 For they mouth empty, boastful words and, by appealing to the lustful desires of sinful human nature, they entice people who are just escaping from those who live in error.

19 They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity--for a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him.

20 If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning.

21 It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them.

22 Of them the proverbs are true: "A dog returns to its vomit," and, "A sow that is washed goes back to her wallowing in the mud."

What is your first impression of this chapter? What's Peter's point?

Go back and circle every reference to the false prophets, and the pronouns that refer to them. List their characteristics in this chart.

Description of the false prophets	Actions of the false prophets	Fate of the false prophets

Go back to the chapter and underline the instances of "if" and "then". Fill in the chart with Peter's comparisons with the false prophets.

Character	Action	Fate	But God protected...
Angels			--
Ancient worlds			
Sodom and Gommorah			
Balaam			--

In verse 9, Peter says " if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the un-righteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment." How would this encourage the believers?

Jude repeats these same themes in his letter:

3 Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints.

4 For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.

5 Though you already know all this, I want to remind you that the Lord delivered his people out of Egypt, but later destroyed those who did not believe.

6 And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home--these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day.

7 In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire.

8 In the very same way, these dreamers pollute their own bodies, reject authority and slander celestial beings.

9 But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"

10 Yet these men speak abusively against whatever they do not understand; and what things they do understand by instinct, like unreasoning animals--these are the very things that destroy them.

11 Woe to them! They have taken the way of Cain; they have rushed for profit into Balaam's error; they have been destroyed in Korah's rebellion.

12 These men are blemishes at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm--shepherds who feed only themselves. They are clouds without rain, blown along by the wind; autumn trees, without fruit and uprooted--twice dead.

Let's look at these stories in the rest of the Bible.

Judgement of angels

<p>What happened to the angels?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Job 4: 18-19</u> If God places no trust in his servants, if he charges his angels with error, how much more those who live in houses of clay, whose foundations are in the dust, who are crushed more readily than a moth. • <u>Luke 10:18</u> [Jesus] replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven." • <u>Isaiah 14:12-14</u> How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High." But you are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit. • <u>Jude 6</u> And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home--these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day. • <u>Matthew 25:41</u> "Then [the king] will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.
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Noah

<p>What happened to the world?</p> <p>Why was Noah spared?</p> <p>Who was with him?</p>	<p>Genesis 6:5-8, 13-14, 17-18 The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain. So the LORD said, "I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth--men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air--for I am grieved that I have made them." But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD...</p> <p>So God said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth. So make yourself an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out...</p> <p>I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish. But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark--you and your sons and your wife and your sons' wives with you...</p> <p>7:17, 22-8:1 For forty days the flood kept coming on the earth, and as the waters increased they lifted the ark high above the earth. Everything on dry land that had the breath of life in its nostrils died. Every living thing on the face of the earth was wiped out; men and animals and the creatures that move along the ground and the birds of the air were wiped from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those with him in the ark. The waters flooded the earth for a hundred and fifty days. But God remembered Noah...</p>
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Lot

What happened to Sodom and Gomorrah?	<p>Genesis 19: 12-25 The two men said to Lot, "Do you have anyone else here--sons-in-law, sons or daughters, or anyone else in the city who belongs to you? Get them out of here, because we are going to destroy this place. The outcry to the LORD against its people is so great that he has sent us to destroy it."</p>
What happened to Lot?	<p>So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who were pledged to marry his daughters. He said, "Hurry and get out of this place, because the LORD is about to destroy the city!" But his sons-in-law thought he was joking.</p>
Who came with him?	<p>With the coming of dawn, the angels urged Lot, saying, "Hurry! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or you will be swept away when the city is punished." When he hesitated, the men grasped his hand and the hands of his wife and of his two daughters and led them safely out of the city, for the LORD was merciful to them. As soon as they had brought them out, one of them said, "Flee for your lives! Don't look back, and don't stop anywhere in the plain! Flee to the mountains or you will be swept away!"</p>
	<p>But Lot said to them, "No, my lords, please! Your servant has found favor in your eyes, and you have shown great kindness to me in sparing my life. But I can't flee to the mountains; this disaster will overtake me, and I'll die. Look, here is a town near enough to run to, and it is small. Let me flee to it--it is very small, isn't it? Then my life will be spared."</p>
	<p>He said to him, "Very well, I will grant this request too; I will not overthrow the town you speak of. But flee there quickly, because I cannot do anything until you reach it." (That is why the town was called Zoar.) By the time Lot reached Zoar, the sun had risen over the land.</p>
	<p>Then the LORD rained down burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah--from the LORD out of the heavens. Thus he overthrew those cities and the entire plain, including all those living in the cities--and also the vegetation in the land. But Lot's wife looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.</p>

Balaam

Why did the donkey speak?	<p>Numbers 22:20-35 That night God came to Balaam and said, "Since these men have come to summon you, go with them, but do only what I tell you."</p> <p>Balaam got up in the morning, saddled his donkey and went with the princes of Moab. But God was very angry when he went, and the angel of the LORD stood in the road to oppose him. Balaam was riding on his donkey, and his two servants were with him. When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD standing in the road with a drawn sword in his hand, she turned off the road into a field. Balaam beat her to get her back on the road. Then the angel of the LORD stood in a narrow path between two vineyards, with walls on both sides. When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, she pressed close to the wall, crushing Balaam's foot against it. So he beat her again.</p> <p>Then the angel of the LORD moved on ahead and stood in a narrow place where there was no room to turn, either to the right or to the left. When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, she lay down under Balaam, and he was angry and beat her with his staff.</p> <p>Then the LORD opened the donkey's mouth, and she said to Balaam, "What have I done to you to make you beat me these three times?"</p> <p>Balaam answered the donkey, "You have made a fool of me! If I had a sword in my hand, I would kill you right now."</p> <p>The donkey said to Balaam, "Am I not your own donkey, which you have always ridden, to this day? Have I been in the habit of doing this to you?" "No," he said. Then the LORD opened Balaam's eyes, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the road with his sword drawn. So he bowed low and fell facedown.</p> <p>The angel of the LORD asked him, "Why have you beaten your donkey these three times? I have come here to oppose you because your path is a reckless one before me. The donkey saw me and turned away from me these three times. If she had not turned away, I would certainly have killed you by now, but I would have spared her."</p> <p>Balaam said to the angel of the LORD, "I have sinned. I did not realize you were standing in the road to oppose me. Now if you are displeased, I will go back." The angel of the LORD said to Balaam, "Go with the men, but speak only what I tell you." So Balaam went with the princes of Balak.</p>
(The rest of the context of the story is in chapters 22-24)	

What conclusions can you make about the judgement of the unrighteous based on these passages?

What happens to the righteous?

The final verse of the chapter "Of them the proverbs are true: 'A dog returns to its vomit,' and, 'A sow that is washed goes back to her wallowing in the mud.'" refers to Proverbs 26: 11 As a dog returns to its vomit, so a fool repeats his folly. What do you think this means?

Application

False teachers continue to abound in our society. We must know scripture well to counter their false teachings with truth. What verses do you know that could argue these false teachings?

False Teaching: You must be baptized to be saved.

Verses to argue this point:

False teaching: You should pray to Mary.

Verses to argue this point:

False teaching: A believer in financial trouble or physically ill is always the result of sin.

Verses to argue this point:

Go back to the chapter 2 of the letter. What examples of the behaviors of false prophets can you cite from contemporary society and today's cults?