

## Review

We are in 2Peter, chapter two. Peter has warned us that false teachers are inside the church, and told us that they will be severely judged by God. He has used many descriptions of them:

- they secretly introduce destructive heresies
- they are apostate (denying the Master who bought them)
- they are sensual and indulge in the flesh
- they are greedy, exploitive liars
- they despise authority

Peter now continues his exposé of the apostate false teachers, telling us about their actions and attributes.

### **2:10b-14 Reviling And Rebuking**

In the last few decades, the Christian church has seen a surge in interest in spiritual warfare. Now, you can read books or attend seminars which instruct you how exactly how to rebuke the devil.

But the Bible never tells us to rebuke or revile the devil. We are to resist the devil (James 4:7). As a matter of fact, Jude (Jude 1:8-10) and Peter (2Pet. 2:10-11) both tell us that those who rebuke and revile the devil have no idea what they are doing. They are without understanding, acting on instinct like animals do.

Rebuking and reviling the devil is what false teachers do. They presume to have the authority to revile angelic majesties. But the book of Hebrews tells us that man has been made

**Heb. 2:7 ...LOWER THAN THE ANGELS...**

We do not rank higher than angels, and must respect their authority. Peter says that even the angels themselves - who are greater in might and power than we are - respect lines of authority, even when dealing with "the other team":

**Jude 9 ...Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"**

If you have been taught that going around rebuking the devil is

what spiritual warfare is all about, I would highly recommend picking up the following studies:

Daniel 10:13-11:1 Real Spiritual Warfare

Matthew 16:5-19 - Binding and Loosing

1Peter 5:8-14 - The Roaring Lion

## **Enticing Unstable Souls**

Apostates live by instinct. They always choose to do what feels good instead of what is right. And they encourage Christians to do the same.

They try to entice you into sin by saying, "It's all good, you're saved by grace. You've got liberty, you've got freedom, you're not under the law. God loves you just the way you are. He made you to enjoy this, He wants you to feel good."

Those things sound reasonable, they even sound biblical. Can you respond biblically to those temptations? If not, you're a likely candidate for deception. An "unstable soul." Unstable (Gk: "**as-TAY-rik-tos**") means "not firmly established, not able to stand strong."

We must make it our purpose to become established, rooted, and foundationalized in the Word of God, so that we are able to stand firm.

## **2:15-16 The Way Of Balaam**

These false teachers have gone astray, having followed the way of Balaam.

Balaam is a guy whose story can be found in Numbers 22-24:

Before the Israelites were able to enter the Promised Land, they had quite a bit of traveling to do. At one point, they camped next to King Baw-LAWK's kingdom. He didn't want them there, and so he sent messengers to a prophet named Balaam. They asked him to come and curse the Israelites. Balaam said, "Spend the night, and I'll ask God about it."

**Num. 22:12-13 And God said to Balaam, "Do not go with them; you shall not curse the people; for they are blessed." So Balaam arose in the morning and said to Balak's leaders, "Go back to your land, for the LORD has refused to let me go with you."**

Baw-LAWK tried again. He sent more messengers, with promises of more money. Balaam liked the idea of wealth, and so he said, "Stay the night, and I'll check with God and see if he tells me something else."

God was angry that Balaam was asking a question He'd already answered. He told Balaam, "Fine, just go."

**Num. 22:22 But God was angry because he was going, and the angel of the LORD took his stand in the way as an adversary against him...**

Balaam was riding on a donkey, who apparently was more spiritually in tune than he was. She could see the angel waiting to kill Balaam. She off the path and went into a field. Balaam hit her and she got back on the road. Then she pressed herself against the wall, pinning Balaam's foot. He hit her again. Finally, the donkey simply sat down under him. Again he hit the donkey.

**Num. 22:28-31 And the LORD opened the mouth of the donkey, and she said to Balaam, "What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?" Then Balaam said to the donkey, "Because you have made a mockery of me! If there had been a sword in my hand, I would have killed you by now." And the donkey said to Balaam, "Am I not your donkey on which you have ridden all your life to this day? Have I ever been accustomed to do so to you?" And he said, "No." Then the LORD opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way with his drawn sword in his hand; and he bowed all the way to the ground.**

Balaam had finally seen the angel of the Lord.

**Num. 22:34-35 And Balaam said to the angel of the LORD, "I have sinned, for I did not know that you were standing in the way against me. Now then, if it is displeasing to you, I will turn back." But the angel of the LORD said to Balaam, "Go with the men, but you shall speak only the word which I shall tell you." So Balaam went along with the leaders of Balak.**

When God spoke only blessings through Balaam three times, Baw-LAWK was infuriated. Balaam's response was,

**Num. 23:8 "How shall I curse, whom God has not cursed?"**

But all the while, Balaam's heart was divided - he was infatuated with the idea of getting rich. And although he couldn't curse in the name of God, he did get an idea: If Baw-LAWK could put a stumbling block in front of the Israelites, then God Himself would be forced to curse them.

Because Balaam "loved the wages of unrighteousness", he counseled Balak to tempt the Israelites with the women of Midian. This caused them to intermarry with the Midianites and fall into immorality and idolatry, bringing about the judgment of God.

Jesus said of Balaam, "He...

**Rev. 2:14 "...kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit {acts of} immorality"**

In order to gain wealth, Balaam tried to get around God's commandment, and caused God's people to stumble in the process.

Peter says that this is exactly what the false teachers do: for the sake of greed, they cause God's people to stumble in sin.

## **2:17-19 False Advertisers**

False teachers are false advertisers. They are like empty soda machines on a hot day, or a big thundercloud passing over during a drought, but dropping no rain. They preach freedom, but instead put people into bondage. They preach enlightenment, but instead plunge people into darkness.

## **2:20-22 Re-entangled In Defilements**

This is the way of apostasy: Someone escapes the defilements of the world, but then gets entangled in them again.

It's just like the proverb says,

**Prov. 26:11 Like a dog that returns to its vomit is a fool who repeats his folly**

Having the holy commandment handed to you, only to turn away

from it is just as foolish.

It is what the Bible calls "falling away," and we are warned against it time and time again throughout the Scriptures.

**Luke 9:62 ...Jesus said to him, "No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."**

**1Tim. 4:1 ...the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons**

**Heb. 3:12-14 Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end**

Let me encourage you today: hold fast. Don't turn to the right or to the left. Stay on the straight and narrow path. The Lord is returning soon, in spite of what the skeptics say.

As a matter of fact, Peter will be addressing that very fact in our next study, as we begin chapter three next week...