

6. Understanding the Way False Teachers Try to Deceive

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to recognize the character of false teachers. In this way, we are helping to protect them from false teachers and also equipping them to help weak and immature Christians so that they will not be deceived. Our topic today will be a continuation of that topic as we look at various ways that false teachers deceive themselves as they try to deceive others.

In 2 Peter 2:18, we read, “For when they speak great swelling *words* of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error.” Here, Peter helps us to understand the way that false teachers speak. The word translated “great swelling” means *big words that make a person sound like the person has great knowledge and understanding*. Jude 1:16 says, “These are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts; and they mouth great swelling *words*, flattering people to gain advantage.” Here, we see that they speak these words to flatter people and gain an advantage. The word translated “emptiness” means *words that have no truth*. Ephesians 4:17-18 says, “This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.” Here, the word is translated futility.

We also see that false teachers allure through the lusts of the flesh. The word translated “allure” means *to catch by bait or to entice and deceive*. The thing that false teachers use as their bait to deceive is the lusts of the flesh. The word translated “lusts” means *a craving or desire for what is forbidden*. The word translated “flesh” means *the earthly nature of man without the influence of God*. Galatians 5:19-21 says, “Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told *you* in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.” False teachers offer a religion which encourages people to satisfy their sinful desires. “Lewdness” means *uncontrolled lusts*. 1 Peter 4:3 says, “For we *have spent* enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles--when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries.” Here, we see the word is used to describe our life before Christ.

We see that false teachers often aim their teachings at those who are trying to escape from those living in error. Many people begin to get tired of their sinful lives and decide that religion may help them to develop a better life. 2 Peter 1:4 says that true Christians have escaped the corruptions of the world. That verse says, “By which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption *that is* in the world through lust.” Instead of telling people to repent and receive forgiveness of sins, false teachers offer a religion of self-effort that they say will help such people live a better life. The difference is that this better life is offered through self-effort, instead of repentance and faith in Christ. We will see the consequences of this false religion in verse 20.

Growing Godly Family Series – Helping Our Children Learn to Understand the Last Days 6. “Understanding the Way False Teachers Try to Deceive”

Updated July 2023

Copyright © 2006, Duane L. Anderson, American Indian Bible Institute; 2022, DLA, Serve and Equip
Scripture taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

This resource is available from and distributed free of charge by Serve and Equip <https://sveq.org>
ANY REPRODUCTION OF MATERIAL FOR RESALE OR PROFIT IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED

In 2 Peter 2:19-21, we read, “While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage. For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them.” Here, we see that false teachers promise liberty to those who follow their false teachings.

Galatians 5 gives us two warnings about the liberty that false teachers will offer. Galatians 5:1 says, “Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.” True liberty through Christ sets us free. Here, we see that false liberty entangles a person again in a new yoke of bondage. In the following verses, we see that this new yoke of bondage is keeping the law. Galatians 5:4 says, “You have become estranged from Christ, you who *attempt to* be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.” Here, we see that some false teachers will deceive those who are trying to escape from their sinful life by telling people that they can become acceptable to God by keeping either the Jewish law or certain rules that the false teachers teach. This is just a different yoke of bondage.

Galatians 5:13 says, “For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not *use* liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.” We have already seen that many false teachers encourage people to adopt a religion that gives them freedom to fulfill the sinful desires of the flesh. In contrast, this verse says that true liberty gives us the liberty to serve one another in love. We might use an illustration that helps us to understand true liberty. We could compare true liberty to a road with deep ditches on both sides. One ditch is the yoke of bondage of the Jewish law or the rules that false teachers teach. The other ditch is the religion of false teachers that tells people that they can continue to fulfill the sinful desires of the flesh. Both teachings are false, so that is why they are like deep ditches.

True liberty begins when a person repents of his or her sin of unbelief and places his or her faith in the death and resurrection of Christ. We are able to walk in that liberty as Christians as we learn to walk in the Spirit and be led by the Holy Spirit. Galatians 5:16 says, “I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.” Here, we see that as we walk in the Spirit that we will not be deceived by the teaching of false teachers that says that we can continue to fulfill the sinful desires of the flesh. Galatians 5:18 says, “But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.” Here, we see that once we come to Christ that we are no longer under the law. Instead, we are able to walk by faith. 2 Corinthians 5:7 says, “For we walk by faith, not by sight.” As we learn to walk in the Spirit and be led by the Spirit our lives will begin to bear the fruit of the Spirit. Galatians 5:22-23 says, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.” The fruit of the Spirit is the result of learning to yield to the Spirit.

We also see that false teachers promise others liberty when they are actually slaves of corruption themselves. The word translated “slaves” is the word for a bondsman. The word translated

“corruption” is the same word used in verse 12 where we read, “But these, like natural brute beasts made to be caught and destroyed, speak evil of the things they do not understand, and will utterly perish in their own corruption.” This verse reminds us that they are slaves to sin and will experience eternal judgment because of their own sin. Certainly, they cannot help anyone else when they face eternal judgment. Their own sins have made them slaves to sin and the judgment that sin brings.

Many of those who are false teachers at one time turned to religion to try and get free from their own bondage to sin. They may even have heard what the Word of God says about Christ so that they had some knowledge of salvation. However, they chose to depend on their own works instead of turning to Christ in true repentance. Hebrews 10:26-27 says, “For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.” Such individuals become entangled in their own bondage because they often believe their own false teachings. As a result, they continue to face eternal judgment. We see that the end for such false teachers is worse than the beginning.

That is why verse 21 warns that it would have been for them if they had not known that they needed to turn from their sin of unbelief than to make the choice to turn from the commandment of God. Hebrews 10:29 says, “Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?” Here we see that such unbelief after hearing the Gospel is compared to trampling the Son of God underfoot and treating His blood as if it meant nothing.

2 Peter 2:22 goes on to say, “But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: ‘A dog returns to his own vomit,’ and, ‘a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire.’” Here, we see two vivid word pictures of the choice that describe false teachers who have heard the Gospel and rejected it. First, we see that they are like a dog that has returned to eat its own vomit. This is a quote from Proverbs 26:11 where we see that it is a description of a fool. Proverbs 26:11 says, “As a dog returns to his own vomit, so a fool repeats his folly.” Here, we see that a fool continues to repeat his folly. Second, we see that when a pig is given a bath that the first thing that the pig does is go back and lays down in the mud. Both word pictures describe the fact that the condition of these animals is worse in the end than their condition was in the beginning. We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that false teachers work hard to deceive others, and in the end, they deceive themselves by their own lies. Their final judgment will be greater than if they had never heard the true Gospel. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to understand why false teachers try to deceive.