

# False teachers

Notes for 13 Sep

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Read: [2 Peter 2](#)

I think I get all the good chapters! Catherine's random draw gave me the very contentious chapter of 1 Peter 2 (on submission and slavery) and now I get 2 Peter 2, the 'false prophets' chapter.

So...

What is a *false prophet* or a *false teacher*?

Like most of you, I have some experience of being on the receiving end of conservative opprobrium about some of my views. Views that I thought were reasonable and reasonably argued. My conservative friends were quite quite sure that it was *not them* who were misled or confused. So, it must be me. I must have been listening to false prophets and teachers.

I could cynically conclude that a 'false prophet' is, almost by definition, someone who says something my conservative friends don't agree with. If "*I* don't think it, then *you* must be misled" - how many times have we all heard that argument?

I feel we need to do better!

## Discussion

- How can you tell if a teacher, leader, or influencer is trustworthy?
- Does this chapter give any hints? If so, what are they?

Read 2 Peter:1-22. Broadly it splits thus:

- vv. 1–3 false teachers introduced
- vv. 4–9 examples of judgment and rescue
- vv. 10–22 character of false teachers

### **vv. 1-3: False Teachers Exposed**

Peter lays out these identifiers for false prophets/teachers

1. They bring heresies secretly.
2. They deny Christ.
3. They exploit through greed.

Can you think of persons you know, or know of, who do these things? Think about each identifier - is it always easy to, say, identify someone who 'brings heresies secretly'?

## **vv. 4-9: God's Judgement and Rescue**

Peter gives OT examples of God's judgement: angels, Noah, and Sodom. But in amongst that he points out that God rescued Noah and Lot. God knows how to save his people.

- What do you make of v9: "So you see, the Lord knows how to rescue godly people from their trials, even while keeping the wicked under punishment until the day of final judgment"?
- What comfort can we find in God's justice?
- How does this shape our endurance during trials?

## **vv. 10-22: The Nature and End of False Teachers**

Well, it seems to be pretty clear! False teachers are arrogant, greedy, empty, enslaved to sin. They are compared to Balaam, animals, wells without water. Their end is destruction; their last state is worse than the first.

- Is it that simple?
- Do you think you've ever fallen victim to a false teacher? (Be honest!)
- If 'yes', how do you look back on that experience now? What did you learn from it?
- If 'no', then... To quote the old adage from school "If you weren't bullied then you were the bully!" So, if you weren't misled are you the false teacher?

The chapter ends with some rather graphic imagery - I can confirm that Herbie, my aged labrador, will, indeed, return to his own vomit!

## **Final thoughts**

- What steps do you take to guard yourself and others from spiritual deception?
- How do you balance protecting yourself from possible false ideas with being open to new ideas?
  - Is it better to engage with *all* new ideas and risk falsehoods?
  - Or, instinctively be suspicious all *all* new thinking - just in case it might be false?