

# Abounding Grace Christian Church

## A Study of the Second Epistle of Peter – Part 10

### I. Exposition of Chapter Two – False Prophets and Teachers (Continued).

A. Verse 14 – “having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin, enticing unstable souls. *They have a heart trained in covetous practices, and are accursed children.*”

1. “...eyes full of adultery...” – A better translation of this is “having eyes full of an adulteress.”<sup>1</sup> Of course “adultery” is defined as: “voluntary sexual intercourse between a married man and someone other than his wife or between a married woman and someone other than her husband.”<sup>2</sup> Concerning this, Dr. Bob Utley writes: “They looked at every woman at Christ’s table as a sex object. These false teachers were sexually exploitive (cf. 2:2, 10, 14, 18).”<sup>3</sup>

2. “...and that cannot cease from sin...” – Scholars place this together with the above. Douglas Moo writes: “By this he means that the false teachers are so addicted to sex that they look at every woman as a potential partner in their lust.”<sup>4</sup>

3. “...enticing unstable souls” – The word “enticing” means; “to lure or entice someone to sin...—to lead astray”<sup>5</sup> The word “unstable” means; “pertaining to the tendency to change and waver in one’s views and attitudes”<sup>6</sup> This same word is used in 3:16 and states that unstable people are ones who twist the Scriptures. This shows the importance of having our hearts established in God’s Word. Peter had already referred to his audience as ones who were “...established in the present truth...” (1:12). Cf. James 5:7-8 and Psalm 112:1-8.

4. “They have a heart trained in covetous practices...” – We saw this word “covetous” already in verse 3. We defined it then as: “to take advantage of someone, usually as the result of a motivation of greed”<sup>7</sup> The word “trained” means; “to train in gymnastic discipline; hence, to exercise in anything, train to use, discipline”<sup>8</sup> These false teachers had exercised greed for so long that they now had become experts at. They had practiced so well that they knew how to manipulate and deceive in order to get more and more of whatever they wanted.

5. “...are accursed children.” – The New Living Translation reads; “They live under God’s curse”. Kenneth Gangel writes;

“No wonder Peter called them an accursed brood (lit., “children of a curse,” a Hebraism denoting certain destruction from the hand of God). Sensuality, deception, greed—all are deserving of God’s wrath.”<sup>9</sup>

B. Verse 15 – “They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;”

1. “They have forsaken the right way and gone astray...” – The word “forsaken” means; “to quit, depart from, forsake”<sup>10</sup> So, they “quit” or “departed from” the “...right way...”. The “right way” in this context could be described as the “...way of truth...” (verse 2) and the “...way of righteousness...” (verse 21). This tells us that, at one time, these false teachers followed the truth and righteousness, but they left it in order to pursue sin. They are said to have “...gone astray...” which means; “to wander about, stray”<sup>11</sup>

2. “...following the way of Balaam the son of Beor...” – Now Peter, after giving examples from the book of Genesis in verses 4-8, now turns to the book of Numbers. Balaam was a Gentile false prophet who was hired by Balak, the king of Moab, to curse Israel because he was afraid that Israel was going to fight Moab and win in battle (cf. Numbers 22-25; 31:8, 16; Joshua 13:22). He is also mentioned in Jude 11 as one whose greed caused him to err. Balaam could not curse Israel even though he wanted to in order to gain money (“...loved the wages of unrighteousness”) Out of his mouth always came blessing. But, eventually, Balaam contributed to the downfall of Israel by showing the Moabites how to bring the men of Israel into Baal worship and immorality.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*, vol. 12 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 57.

<sup>2</sup> Inc Merriam-Webster, *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*. (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 2003).

<sup>3</sup> Robert James Dr. Utley, *The Gospel according to Peter: Mark and I & II Peter*, vol. Volume 2, Study Guide Commentary Series (Marshall, Texas: Bible Lessons International, 2000), 292.

<sup>4</sup> *The NIV Application Commentary: 2 Peter and Jude*, Douglas J. Moo (Zondervan Publishers, Grand Rapids, 1996.)

<sup>5</sup> Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 774.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 375.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 757.

<sup>8</sup> William D. Mounce, *Mounce’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old & New Testament Words* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 1114.

<sup>9</sup> Kenneth O. Gangel, “2 Peter,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 872–873.

<sup>10</sup> Mounce, 1183.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 1245.

<sup>12</sup> Lawson G. Hatfield, “Balaam,” ed. Chad Brand et al., *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003), 163.

C. Verse 16 – “...but he was rebuked for his iniquity: a dumb donkey speaking with a man's voice restrained the madness of the prophet.” – This portion of the narrative is found in **Numbers 22:22-35**. God supernaturally opened the donkey’s mouth after an angel of the Lord had appeared to the donkey which saved Balaam’s life. Kenneth Gangel comments:

**“A mere donkey, a dumb animal, was smarter than Balaam! The false teachers, like Balaam, had sinned so long and so intensely that their sin had become a form of insanity. Also today many people have so thoroughly given themselves over to avarice and debauchery that their lifestyles are spiritually insane. Money and sex (even in the name of religion) continue to bring spiritual ruin to many people. This is “the error of Balaam” (Jude 11), his way which is diverse from the straight way.”<sup>13</sup>**

D. Verse 17 – “These are wells without water, clouds carried by a tempest, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.”

1. “...wells without water...” – The word “wells” would have been better translated; “a fountain, spring”<sup>14</sup> The idea is that the false teachers show the promise of bringing blessing but in the end, they bring nothing but death and emptiness.
2. “...clouds carried by a tempest...” – The word “clouds” is better translated as the word “mists” which A.T. Robertson writes is an old word for fog.<sup>15</sup> The word “tempest” means; “sudden and violent gusts of winds, often from varied directions”<sup>16</sup> This seems to carry the same idea as above. The mists suggest refreshing rain but the winds blow it away before any blessing of rain comes.
3. “...for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.” – Again, this is an expression of a coming judgment for these false teachers. This is also paralleled in **Jude 13**. It is a metaphor for eternal punishment using darkness (cf. **Matthew 8:12; 22:13; 25:30**).

E. Verse 18 – “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.”

1. “...they speak great swelling words of emptiness...” – The words “...great swelling...” means; “pertaining to excessive boasting”<sup>17</sup> Thayer adds the words, “immoderate, extravagant; expressive of arrogance”<sup>18</sup> “They brag about themselves with empty, foolish boasting...” – New Living Translation
2. “...they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness...” – The word “allure” is the same word found in **verse 14**, translated “enticing” which means; “to lure or entice someone to sin...—to lead astray”<sup>19</sup>. “...the lusts of the flesh” are brought up again (cf. **verse 10**). The fact that this is mentioned so often tells us that the “lusts” (sinful desires) of the “flesh” (fallen nature) is a very powerful and dangerous force that we need to be on guard against. The word “lewdness” means; “behavior completely lacking in moral restraint, usually with the implication of sexual licentiousness”<sup>20</sup>
3. “...the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error.” – The false teachers are said to be enticing the ones who have “...escaped from those who live in error.” – The word “escaped” was also seen in **1:4** where it states that believers have “...escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” The word “escape” means; “to be rid, be freed from”<sup>21</sup> This word is also found in **2:20** where it states that believers “...have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ...”. When we get to **verse 20**, however, we’ll see that it’s possible to be “...again entangled...”.

F. Verse 19 – “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.”

1. “...they promise them liberty...” – The false teachers were alluring/enticing the believers by promising them “liberty”. This, so called liberty was, primarily in the form of sexual looseness.
2. “...they themselves are slaves of corruption...” – The word “corruption” means; “a state of moral corruption and depravity”<sup>22</sup>
3. “...for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage.” – The basic meaning of this is whatever controls, or overcomes you, you become a slave, in bondage to it.

<sup>13</sup> Gangel, “2 Peter,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*: 873.

<sup>14</sup> Joseph Henry Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Being Grimm’s Wilke’s Clavis Novi Testamenti* (New York: Harper & Brothers., 1889), 508.

<sup>15</sup> A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933), 2 Pe 2:17.

<sup>16</sup> Louw and Nida, 167.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 431.

<sup>18</sup> Thayer, 641.

<sup>19</sup> Louw and Nida, 774.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 770.

<sup>21</sup> Mounce, 1095.

<sup>22</sup> Louw and Nida, 770.