

# FALSE PROPHETS OF THE LAST DAYS

BIBLE TEXT : II Peter 2:1-22.

LESSON 455 Senior Course

**MEMORY VERSE:** "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able" (Luke 13:24).

## BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

### 2 Peter 2:1-22

<sup>1</sup> But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

<sup>2</sup> And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.

<sup>3</sup> And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.

<sup>4</sup> For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast *them* down to hell, and delivered *them* into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;

<sup>5</sup> And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth *person*, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;

<sup>6</sup> And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned *them* with an overthrow, making *them* an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly;

<sup>7</sup> And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked:

<sup>8</sup> (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed *his* righteous soul from day to day with *their* unlawful deeds;)

<sup>9</sup> The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:

<sup>10</sup> But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous *are they*, selfwilled, they are not afraid

## BIBLE REFERENCES:

### I False Prophets in the Last Days

#### 1. God's Word warns of their appearance, II Peter 2:1;

##### **Deuteronomy 13:1-4**

<sup>1</sup> If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder,

<sup>2</sup> And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them;

<sup>3</sup> Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

<sup>4</sup> Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him.

##### **Matthew 7:15-16**

<sup>15</sup> Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

<sup>16</sup> Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

##### **Colossians 2:8**

<sup>8</sup> Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

##### **1 Timothy 4:1-3**

<sup>1</sup> Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

<sup>2</sup> Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;

<sup>3</sup> Forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.

#### 2. They have a large following but bring reproach on the true Gospel, II Peter 2:2;

##### **Matthew 24:10-12**

<sup>10</sup> And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

<sup>11</sup> And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

<sup>12</sup> And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

##### **Revelation 12:9**

<sup>9</sup> And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

#### 3. Covetousness is one of their sins, II Peter 2:3; I

##### **Isaiah 56:11**

<sup>11</sup> Yea, *they are* greedy dogs *which* can never have enough, and *they are* shepherds *that* cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter.

##### **Jeremiah 6:13**

<sup>13</sup> For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely.

##### **Micah 3:11**

<sup>11</sup> The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for

to speak evil of dignities.

<sup>11</sup> Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord.

<sup>12</sup> But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption;

<sup>13</sup> And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, *as* they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots *they are* and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you;

<sup>14</sup> Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children:

<sup>15</sup> Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam *the son* of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;

<sup>16</sup> But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet.

<sup>17</sup> These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever.

<sup>18</sup> For when they speak great swelling *words* of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, *through much* wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error.

<sup>19</sup> While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.

<sup>20</sup> For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.

<sup>21</sup> For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have

money: yet will they lean upon the LORD, and say, *Is not the LORD among us?* none evil can come upon us.

#### **1 Timothy 6:5**

<sup>5</sup> Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.

#### **Titus 1:11**

<sup>11</sup> Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.

### **II Certain Punishment**

#### **1. Scripture records the evil fate of workers of iniquity, II Peter 2:4–6;**

##### **Jude 1:6**

<sup>6</sup> And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

##### **Genesis 6:13**

<sup>13</sup> And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.

##### **Genesis 19:24**

<sup>24</sup> Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven;

##### **Ezekiel 16:49**

<sup>49</sup> Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.

##### **Ezekiel 16:50**

<sup>50</sup> And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me: therefore I took them away as I saw *good*.

#### **2. Scripture also records God's deliverance for the godly, II Peter 2:7–9;**

##### **1 Thessalonians 4:15-17**

<sup>15</sup> For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

<sup>16</sup> For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

<sup>17</sup> Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

### **III Walking After the Flesh**

#### **1. They are apostate, presumptuous and without respect or reverence, II Peter 2:10–12;**

##### **Jude 1:8-10**

<sup>8</sup> Likewise also these *filthy* dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.

<sup>9</sup> Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.

<sup>10</sup> But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.

##### **Numbers 12:8**

<sup>8</sup> With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the LORD shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?

#### **2. They not only deceive others but also themselves, II Peter 2:13–16;**

##### **2 Thessalonians 2:10-12**

<sup>10</sup> And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth,

known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.

<sup>22</sup> But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog *is* turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

that they might be saved.

<sup>11</sup> And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

<sup>12</sup> That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

**Jude 1:11**

<sup>11</sup> Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.

**Jude 1:12**

<sup>12</sup> These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds *they are* without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots;

2. They are victims of all manner of error, II Peter 2:17, 18;

**Jude 1:16**

<sup>16</sup> These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling *words*, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage.

**IV Their Latter End Worse Than Their Beginning**

1. They promise liberty but bring bondage, II Peter 2:19;

**John 8:34**

<sup>34</sup> Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.

**Galatians 6:8**

<sup>8</sup> For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

3. It is better not to have known righteousness than, having known, to turn from the holy commandment, II Peter 2:20–22;

**Luke 11:24–26**

<sup>24</sup> When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out.

<sup>25</sup> And when he cometh, he findeth *it* swept and garnished.

<sup>26</sup> Then goeth he, and taketh *to him* seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last *state* of that man is worse than the first.

**NOTES:**

The first chapter of II Peter closed with the announcement that holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost; the second chapter opens with, "But there were false prophets also among the people." God's Word is faithful to the hearts of men in that it warns of the dangers encountered along life's pathway. In Psalm 19:11, the Psalmist, in speaking of the law and statutes of the Lord, said, "Moreover by them is thy servant warned." In days when apostasy and error flourish in the religious realm, it is more important than ever that those who have the truth should cherish, uphold and spread it. No wonder the writer in I John 4:1 said: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false

prophets are gone out into the world." There never was a time when the true follower of Christ so needed the Holy Spirit as the discernor to show the true from the false as he does today.

### **Heresies**

The Apostle Peter calls the subtle work of false teachers "damnable heresies." They do not bring a greater knowledge of God's Word, but seek to lessen the standard of God's Word by watering down the truth and by accommodating private sins. Their ideas are brought in on the sly, along with or mixed with truth to give the impression or appearance of rightness and authority.

**MODERNISM** is one of the deadliest heresies in the world today. Its poison has entered into almost the whole professed church. They claim to have a deeper and truer view of Christianity. It is antagonistic to the Bible and to Christ, denying the divinity of Christ and the inspiration of the Scriptures. They are saying that the world has outgrown, in many ways, the Bible. They claim that belief in one's self is belief in God; they deny the Virgin Birth of Jesus, the efficacy of the Blood, and the need for the new birth. We have denominations today that once had the power of God on their ministry, but they have slipped into decline by failing to hold to the fundamentals of God's Word. The once strong, clear preaching in regard to repentance, confession of sins, and holiness in a life above sin has since been silenced, lest the worldly members be offended and their membership fall off. The church has been degraded into a place of dances, worldly amusements and such things in an effort to hold the young people. In short, instead of the church converting the world, the world has converted the church to Modernism and worldliness. No longer does the Spirit of God grip the hearts of young and old alike in the thrill of the message of simple faith in the true and living God, which results in converts at the altar praying their way through to the knowledge of sins forgiven.

**THE DARWINIAN THEORY OF EVOLUTION** has entered the schools and colleges and churches. It teaches that all things came about by chance. The evolutionists say that man is an apelike creature with an ape ancestry. They deny that the universe and man were special acts of creation by God Almighty. The fall of man into sin in the Garden of Eden is rejected, and they say there is no need of a Saviour to redeem man from sin. An evolutionist has said, "The descendants from apes don't need a Saviour." Evolutionists say with the Communists that "man is a material machine; he is matter in motion, and nothing more. Man has no soul, no spirit, no significant value, no continuity of life, no heaven to gain nor hell to shun." Man they declare, can reach his highest development by his own wisdom and initiative.

They call the miracles of the Bible myths, legends, allegories, and deny the Virgin Birth of Christ. This theory is called the "twentieth-century religion."

**MILLENNIAL DAWNISM** is sponsored by "Jehovah's Witnesses." These dangerous and deceptive teachings (also called "Zion's Watch Tower" and "International Bible Students Association"), have caused many a soul to go on in his sins and hope for salvation after death. It teaches that there is another chance after death. It denies everlasting punishment for the wicked, and teaches annihilation. It teaches that the wicked will be resurrected and have another chance to accept salvation on earth, then at the end of the Millennium, the wicked and the devil and fallen angels will be

burned up and annihilated. This false doctrine contradicts the truth of God's Word, and is deceiving thousands.

**CHRISTIAN SCIENCE** Paul exhorted Timothy to avoid "profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called" (I Timothy 6:20). No true science conflicts with God's revealed truth; but this so-called Christian Science today denies Christ, sin, the need of a Saviour, the power of the shed Blood of Jesus Christ. It is ensnaring the hearts of men, leading them into darkness. (See I John 4:3.)

**THE JESUS' NAME DOCTRINE** is another false teaching which is the outgrowth of the spiritual confusion and fanaticism of these last days. This teaching deludes its followers by seeking to destroy the recognition of God the Father and the Holy Ghost as distinct Persons of the Godhead, or Trinity, saying that Jesus only is to be recognised. This delusion teaches that Jesus is not really the Son of God, but that Jesus was the Father also. (See John 3:16.) They instruct their followers to be baptised in the "name of Jesus" only; yet the words of Jesus to His disciples were: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 28:19).

### **False Summation**

We do not need new revelations or new light in our day, but grace to walk in the light of God's Word already shed on our pathway. These false religions lead one to deny the Lord who bought them, and bring about their swift destruction. Their pernicious ways are very destructive, injurious, evil and fatal. Many do follow them. The conduct of these professors inevitably cause Christianity to be evil spoken of by those who blend the false and true teachings together.

### **Covetousness**

With desire for personal gain and "having men's persons in admiration because of advantage" (Jude 16) they will, with crafty and smooth speeches, use men as merchants do their wares, to gain by them. God's condemnation of such sinners may seem inactive, but it is really at work. Their destruction awaits them and will overwhelm them, though it seems delayed.

### **Examples of God's Punishments**

God's Word, through the mouth of the Apostle, tells us that God did not spare the angels who sinned, although they had once shared the glory of Heaven, but cast them down to hell for their sins (**Isaiah 14:12-15** <sup>12</sup> How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! *how* art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! <sup>13</sup> For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: <sup>14</sup> I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. <sup>15</sup> Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.). He has them "reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day" (Jude 6).

The second example of God's judgment of the ungodly is shown in the antediluvian age. Some today think that because the majority are indulging in sin, that makes it legitimate; but God condemns sin and will punish all sinners. God did not spare the unbelievers who had heard faithful Noah, a preacher of righteousness. They may have planned to change their ways at a future date, but when the day came that God shut the door of the ark, it was too late. Neglect can be as great a sin as rebellion or unbelief. The Scripture tells us that Noah and seven others were



saved, which shows that God delivers the godly. That is as much a certainty as God's judgment of the wicked.

As a third example, the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah are used. In Genesis 18:20 we read that, "their sin is very grievous." In Ezekiel 16:49, 50 we are told that the iniquity of Sodom was "pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness . . . And they were haughty, and committed abomination." The sixth verse of our chapter tells us that God overthrew these cities by turning them into ashes, "making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly."

### **Deliverance of the Godly**

Lot's life was saved as by fire. God's angels took him and some of his family by the hand and led them out of the city. Lot had been vexed, or tormented, by their evil conversation and deeds, and their despising of all law. God will always deliver His faithful people in His own way and wisdom. God's people are not exempt from temptation or even suffering unto death, as some martyrs have endured, but "the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations" (II Peter 2:9). (1 **Corinthians 10:13**

<sup>13</sup> There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it*.)

### **Judgment Sure**

The Lord knows how to punish the ungodly, and especially does this apply to the basely abominable characters here named. Self-will begets presumption and presumption dares to defy government and speak evil of dignities. The corruption that they advocated, taught and practiced brought destruction upon themselves. The wages, or reward, of sin is death. False teachers are spots and blemishes on the name of Christianity. Peter here verifies the Old Testament account of the dumb ass speaking to Balaam, who loved the wages of unrighteousness. (Numbers 22, 23, 24). A well without water would be a great disappointment to the thirsty person.

A professor of righteousness without the Spirit of God is equally disappointing to those who long for the truth. Great swelling words of flattery only spread a net for the feet of the one who is taken in by them.

The liberty of the Gospel can be stated as the power of God in the life enabling the believer to do what is right, with freedom from sin and condemnation. Many think that liberty to do as one pleases is the ultimate in freedom, but this leads only to the fulfilment of carnal desires and bondage as a servant of Satan. "He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption" (Galatians 6:8). Corruption brings destruction. Promising liberty from restraint and scruples, such men are slaves to corruption.

### **Unconditional Eternal Security**

One of the saddest happenings recorded in the Bible is that of a person who has had the knowledge of God and then has returned to the beggarly elements of the world. The examples given of the dog returning to that which made him sick, and the sow that was washed and cleansed returning to wallow in the mire, illustrate the sensuality and disgusting moral filthiness into which these apostates fall.

There are many professors of religion today who will take exception to this very strongly worded statement by the Apostle, in showing the possibility of falling from grace. "Eternal Security" is the title recently adopted for a false teaching variously known as "Perseverance of the Saints," the "Preservation of the Saved," and "Once in Grace, Always in Grace." We find that a person may

be "in grace" today, as he obeys God's Word; but if he sins, in disobedience to God's Word, he will be "in disgrace."

The underlying motive of this doctrine is to excuse and justify sin without destroying the covenant relations with God. It fits perfectly into the theological scheme of those who have lowered the standard of holiness in order to accommodate it to the carnal minds of our modern religionists. It attempts to take the sin out of sin, and to nullify its consequences. It outlines a "thieves and robbers" way to Heaven. It tries to climb in over the wall. For this reason "Eternal Security" is rapidly becoming a popular doctrine in the growing apostasy of these last days. In many cases the responsible exponents of this heresy are probably those who have departed from the love of the truth, and God has sent them strong delusions, that they should believe a lie and be damned (II Thessalonians 2:11, 12). The falsity of this thing should be exposed before it becomes a further stumbling-block to those who are honestly seeking the truth. (See I John 1:7 and 3:9. Also read Jeremiah 23:1-32 and Ezekiel 13.)

#### **QUESTIONS**

1. What are the dangers of false teachers?
2. What kind of following will they have?
3. What effect does this have on the true Gospel?
4. What is their purpose?
5. What three ensamples does Peter give of God's judgment in times past?
6. What does God do with the righteous in days of judgement?
7. What are some of the sins practiced by false teachers?
8. What was the "way of Balaam" spoken of here?
9. Liberty is promised, but what is the result?
10. What does Peter say about the latter end of one who turns back to the pollution's of the world?