

## 2 Peter 2:1–2 Sermon — False Teachers Will Come

### 2 Peter 2:1–2

#### TEXT

**2 Peter 2:1-2** “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. **2** And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.”

#### INTRODUCTION

Second Peter is about **knowing the truth, staying steadfast in it, and not being carried away by error**. Chapter 1 builds that foundation: Peter talks about spiritual growth, remembering what they have been taught, the eyewitness testimony of the apostles, and the sure word of prophecy.

Then chapter 2 starts with the word **But**. Peter moves from the true word of God to the danger of false teachers. That is where we are today: **2 Peter 2:1–2 — False Teachers Will Come**.

Peter does not say false teachers might come. He says there shall be false teachers among you. God tells us ahead of time what to expect.

So we need to know what the Bible says about them. Where do they come from? How do they work? Why do people follow them? And how do we know whether somebody who sounds religious is actually teaching the truth?

#### I. FALSE TEACHERS WILL COME — VERSE 1

**2 Peter 2:1** “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.”

Start with there shall be. God is preparing us. False teachers are going to exist.

Then notice where Peter puts them: among you. False teaching does not always come from somebody openly attacking Christianity. Sometimes it comes from somebody close enough to teach Christians, influence Christians, and gather Christians around himself.

Paul warned church leaders about the same danger.

**Acts 20:29-31** “For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. **30** Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. **31** Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.”

Paul says wolves can enter in, and men can arise from among them speaking perverse things. So being around Christians does not prove somebody's teaching is right. Peter says among you. Paul says of your own selves shall men arise.

And that phrase among you does not prove these false teachers were saved. It proves they were close enough to the believers to influence them.

Jesus gave the same warning.

**Matthew 7:15** “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravaging wolves.”

So appearance cannot be the test. A nice suit, a big building, a smooth voice, a title, or years in ministry cannot decide whether doctrine is true. The Bible has to be the test.

## II. FALSE TEACHERS BRING DESTRUCTIVE ERROR — VERSE 1

**2 Peter 2:1** “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.”

Privily means secretly or in a concealed way. They do not normally walk in and announce that they are bringing destructive doctrine. Error can come in sounding acceptable at first.

Peter calls what they bring damnable heresies. Every mistake does not make somebody a 2 Peter 2 false teacher. A saved person can misunderstand a verse. A preacher can be wrong about something. Peter is describing destructive teaching connected with denying the Lord, pernicious ways, and judgment.

Then we come to the difficult words: the Lord that bought them.

Peter says the Lord bought these false teachers. Let the verse say what it says.

Some people use this verse to teach that these men were saved and then lost salvation. But Peter says they were bought; he does not say they believed and received everlasting life. Those are different questions.

Salvation passages put everlasting life on believing in Christ. John 6:47 says the believer has everlasting life. John 10:28-30 says Christ's sheep will never perish.

So 2 Peter 2 is not teaching that a saved man becomes unsaved. Christ bought them, but the verse never says these false teachers personally believed on Christ and received eternal life.

Later in the chapter Peter describes people who knew the way of righteousness, escaped the pollutions of the world, and then returned. He finishes with a dog returning according to its nature and a washed sow returning to the mire. There was real knowledge and outward change, but Peter never says everlasting life was given and then taken away.

Then Peter says they bring upon themselves swift destruction. God judges false teaching.

Hananiah learned that.

**Jeremiah 28:15-17** “Then said the prophet Jeremiah unto Hananiah the prophet, Hear now, Hananiah; The LORD hath not sent thee; but thou makest this people to trust in a lie. **16** Therefore thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will cast thee from off the face of the earth: this year thou shalt die, because thou hast taught rebellion against the LORD. **17** So Hananiah the prophet died the same year in the seventh month.”

Hananiah made people trust a lie. God saw it, and God judged it. Peter says false teachers bring destruction upon themselves.

### III. MANY WILL FOLLOW THEM — VERSE 2

**2 Peter 2:2** “And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.”

Pernicious means destructive or ruinous. Peter says people will follow their pernicious ways. False teaching affects more than what somebody says; people begin following the course those teachers are leading them into.

And Peter says many shall follow.

That settles something immediately: popularity does not prove truth. A preacher can have thousands of followers and be wrong. A preacher can have fifty followers and be wrong. Numbers settle nothing.

Ahab had plenty of prophets agreeing with him. Micaiah stood against the crowd.

**1 Kings 22:13-14** “And the messenger that was gone to call Micaiah spake unto him, saying, Behold now, the words of the prophets declare good unto the king with one mouth: let thy word, I pray thee, be like the word of one of them, and speak that which is good. **14** And Micaiah said, As the LORD liveth, what the LORD saith unto me, that will I speak.”

The messenger told Micaiah that everybody else was saying the same thing. Micaiah's answer was simple: what the LORD says, that is what I will speak.

That has to be our standard.

The Bereans heard preaching, but they checked the preaching.

**Acts 17:11** “These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”

That is how you protect yourself from false teaching. Search the Scriptures. Do not believe something because Pastor Tapp said it. Do not believe it because your favorite preacher said it. Search the Scriptures whether those things are so.

Then Peter says the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. False teachers do damage beyond the people who follow them. Their conduct gives people a reason to speak against Christianity itself.

Paul describes the same thing.

**Romans 2:23-24** “Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God? **24** For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written.”

Bad representatives can make people speak badly about the truth. But Peter still calls it the way of truth. Their wickedness can damage its reputation; it cannot make God's truth false.

### CONCLUSION

False teachers will come. Some will come from close to God's people. Some will sound convincing. Some will gather many followers. Peter already told us that.

So know your Bible and test what you hear. Do not let popularity, appearance, position, or personality decide truth for you.

And be careful with the term false teacher. Peter is describing people bringing damnable heresies, denying the Lord, leading people into pernicious ways, and bringing destruction upon themselves. Every Christian who is mistaken about something does not automatically belong in that category.

The Bereans give us the right response: hear the teaching, then search the Scriptures.

False teachers will come. **Know the truth well enough to recognize the difference.**

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