



4. The corruption exposed (2 Peter 2:12)
 - a. The contrast—"But these"
 - (1) This contrasts the ignorance and arrogance of the false teachers as opposed to angels and their opposition.
 - (2) The contrast is meant to show that there was a character fault in these men and that this character fault was to be a hint that something was wrong.
 - (3) These men did not understand what they were talking about, but they were still willing to sit in judgment in subjects of which they spoke.
 - b. The likeness
 - (1) As natural brute beasts
 - a) The word *brute* speaks to the limitations on intellect (Psalm 49:10; Psalm 92:6; Psalm 94:8; Proverbs 30:2; Jeremiah 10:8).
 - b) In the present context, it is suggesting that they are limited in their understanding to that of the animal kingdom.
 - c) Furthermore, it would be wise not to miss the inclusion of the word *natural*. The wording in Jude is... "these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves" (Jude 1:10). This reminds us of 1 Corinthians 2:14—"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither CAN HE know them, because they are spiritually discerned."
 - (2) Made to be taken and destroyed
 - a) This phrase is a continuation of the phrase "as natural brute beasts."
 - b) Together, they are parenthetical, and the passage could read "But these...speak evil of the things that they understand not."
 - c) In other words, beasts are said to be made to be taken and destroyed. Perhaps this is in hunting or some other way, but it testifies that the end for the beast is that he will be destroyed.
 - d) As it pertains to the false teachers, the Bible points to their perishing in their own corruption. In short, this is not Calvinistic!
 - c. The behaviour—"speak evil of the things that they understand not"
 - (1) Once again, this is a testimony against the spiritual well-being of these false teachers.
 - (2) They UNDERSTOOD NOT. Why? Because they were natural men (see 1 Corinthians 2:14).
 - d. The reward—"shall utterly perish in their own corruption"; Note: These men perish in and because of their own corruption.



B. Their Covetousness (2 Peter 2:13-17)

1. Their just reward (2 Peter 2:13)

- a. The nature of their reward—“shall receive the reward of unrighteousness”
 - (1) This is the only place in scripture that employs the phrase “reward of unrighteousness;” however, the Bible incorporates other wording that seems to address the same truths.
 - (2) While we often think of a reward as a good thing, the word *reward* itself simply means the return of payment. That could be a good thing, but it can also indicate punishment (Deuteronomy 32:41; 2 Samuel 3:39; Psalm 40:15; Psalm 54:5; Psalm 70:3; Psalm 91:8; Psalm 94:2; Psalm 109:20; Isaiah 3:11; Hosea 4:9; Obadiah 1:15; 2 Timothy 4:14; Hebrews 2:2). Note: This gives interesting perspective to Christ’s rewards at His second coming (Isaiah 40:10; Isaiah 62:11; Obadiah 1:15; Matthew 16:27; Revelation 22:12).
 - (3) While Romans 2:8-9 does not use the word *reward* it certainly communicates that truth by saying:
 - a) Those who “are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness...and...that doeth evil”
 - b) Would receive “indignation and wrath, Tribulation and anguish”
 - (4) In short, the reward of unrighteousness is the return of payment for one’s unrighteousness.
 - a) Certainly, this includes spiritual death which serves as the wages for sin (Romans 6:23).
 - b) However, it seems to go beyond that and include the varying degrees of punishment that men can receive in eternity.
- b. The comparison of their reward—“as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time”
 - (1) The reward to be anticipated by these unbelieving false teachers was equivalent to those who found pleasure in rioting in the daytime.
 - (2) Many men riot, but most who riot do so in the darkness. To do so in the daytime testifies that one has no shame in his wicked conduct.
 - (3) It would be one thing for a man to personally hold false doctrines or beliefs in his heart even if he shared those out in the world, but to share those in amongst the saints shows no shame and a boldness that demands a special level of reward.
 - (4) All things considered; these men were not your typical sinners.
 - a) They were not deceived; they were deceivers.
 - b) They were not ignorant; they were self-willed.
 - c) They were not ashamed; they were bold in their spreading of what they knew in their hearts to be error.



2. Their corruption by infiltration (2 Peter 2:13-14)
 - a. Their infiltration (2 Peter 2:13-14)
 - (1) They feasted with the people of God (2 Peter 2:13).
 - a) It has already been determined that these false teachers saw their greatest opportunity for ministry to be performed among the saints (2 Peter 2:1).
 - b) Not only would they have opportunity to present their teachings; they would also be granted the opportunity to feast with the saints. While some have suggested that this is a reference to the Lord's supper (1 Corinthians 11:20), Jude identifies the feasts as "feasts of charity" (Jude 1:12).
 - (2) They beguiled unstable souls (2 Peter 2:14).
 - a) What does it mean to be *beguiled*?
 - i) The root word *guile* appears eleven times. It implies trickery, deceit, or fraud.
 - ii) The words *beguile(d)* or *beguiling* appears eight times. It indicates that one has been led to hold a false belief by deception or trickery.
 - b) Who are the unstable souls?
 - i) They are the MANY who follow the pernicious ways of the false teachers (2 Peter 2:2).
 - ii) They are not the godly who would be delivered (2 Peter 2:9).
 - iii) They are the ones who were not approved and followed the damnable heresies (1 Corinthians 11:19).
 - b. Their corruption (2 Peter 2:13-14)
 - (1) They were spots and blemishes among the saints, sporting themselves with their own deceivings (2 Peter 2:13).
 - a) Their corruption of others—"among the saints"
 - i) It is interesting that the Bible uses the word *spot* with the word *blemish*.
 - (a) This union is found four times in scripture (Numbers 19:2; Ephesians 5:27; 1 Peter 1:19; 2 Peter 2:13).
 - (b) Of these four appearances, three are to something that is to be holy or consecrated to God and the subjects are said to be WITHOUT spot or blemish. Only one time is the subject something wicked and in that case it is WITH spot and blemish.
 - ii) Apparently, the presence of these false teachers stood out as a corruption of the purity that would have been representative of the body of believers had the false teachers not been in their midst.
 - b) Their corruption of self—"their own deceivings"
 - i) They sported themselves; Note: To sport means to amuse. In other words, they amused themselves.
 - ii) With their own deceivings



- (2) They had eyes full of adultery that could not cease from sin (2 Peter 2:14).
 - a) Their evil appetites—“They had eyes full of adultery”
 - i) Almost every commentator, understandably so, interprets this to mean that these false teachers were constantly looking upon women with lustful and adulterous eyes.
 - ii) While this concept is common and would fit the word *adultery*'s usage in scripture, it seems random in the immediate context.
 - iii) Up to this point, the text has emphasized their pursuit of souls.
 - (a) They would be among the saints and would bring in damnable heresies (2 Peter 2:1).
 - (b) Many would follow their pernicious ways (2 Peter 2:2).
 - (c) Through covetousness, they would make merchandise of the saints (2 Peter 2:3).
 - (d) They entertained themselves with their deceivings while feasting with the saints (2 Peter 2:13).
 - iv) The upcoming statements continue this theme.
 - (a) They beguile unstable souls (2 Peter 2:14).
 - (b) They allure through the lusts of the flesh (2 Peter 2:18).
 - (c) They promise things to others that they cannot deliver (2 Peter 2:19).
 - v) All things considered, the contextual understanding of “eyes full of adultery” seems to allude to spiritual adultery and the obsession these false teachers had with turning the people of the Lord against the Lord hoping for spiritual adultery (Jeremiah 3:8-9; Revelation 2:22).
 - b) Their inability to change—“that could not cease from sin”
 - i) This speaks of an addiction to sin, but it also reminds us of their lost condition.
 - ii) It was not that they WOULD not cease from sin, but that they COULD not cease from sin (see Romans 6:14).
- (3) They exercised their hearts with covetous practices (2 Peter 2:14). Note: Apparently their hearts were increasingly exercised in hardness by their practices.
- (4) They were cursed children (2 Peter 2:14).
 - a) This phrasing offers one more witness against these false teachers.
 - b) Not one time in the Bible are saved people said to be cursed. On the contrary, it points to their lost condition (Matthew 25:41).



3. Their spiritual likeness (2 Peter 2:15-17)
 - a. From history (2 Peter 2:15-16)
 - (1) Their conduct (2 Peter 2:15)
 - a) They had forsaken the right way.
 - b) They had gone astray.
 - (2) Their comparison (2 Peter 2:15-16)
 - a) His identity—"Balaam the son of Bosor" (2 Peter 2:15)
 - b) His conduct (2 Peter 2:15-16)
 - i) He loved the wages of unrighteousness (2 Peter 2:15; Numbers 22:5-21).
 - (a) The elders of Moab and Midian came at him with "the rewards of divination" (Numbers 22:7).
 - (b) Balak promised "I will promote thee unto very great honour" (Numbers 22:17).
 - (c) Balaam pretended that Balak's "house full of silver and gold" could not buy his cooperation (Numbers 22:18).
 - (d) Balaam ultimately disobeyed the Lord's commands and went with the men (Numbers 22:21).
 - ii) He was rebuked for his iniquity (2 Peter 2:16; Numbers 22:22-35).
 - iii) Note: Balaam loved the wages of unrighteousness so much (2 Peter 2:15-16; Jude 1:11) that, even though he could not curse Israel directly, he taught Balak how to get God to turn against His own people by introducing fornication.
 - b. From nature (2 Peter 2:17)
 - (1) These are wells without water.
 - (2) These are clouds that are carried with a tempest.
 - (3) Note: These are earthly illustrations of something that offers great promise of blessing but turns out to be empty.
 - a) The expectation
 - i) The presence of a well promises water.
 - ii) The presence of a cloud promises rain.
 - b) The reality
 - i) The wells had no water to offer.
 - ii) The clouds offered no rain.
 - c) The truth taught
 - i) These false teachers had the appearance of possessing and offering blessing, like wells or clouds.
 - ii) In reality, the teachers were lost, empty, and could only disappoint.
 4. Their coming judgment—"to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever" (2 Peter 2:17); Note: Jude's epistle words this "to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever" (Jude 1:13).



C. Their Seduction (2 Peter 2:18-22)

1. Their purpose (2 Peter 2:18)

a. Their efforts

(1) They speak great swelling words of vanity.

- a) The greatness of their words—"great swelling words"
 - i) Paul warned that such men "by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Romans 16:18). In another place he warned of those who employed "enticing words" (Colossians 2:4).
 - ii) Jude warned that such men "speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage" (Jude 1:16).
- b) The emptiness of their words—"words of vanity"
 - i) Again, Paul warned about those who would deceive with "vain words" (Ephesians 5:6).
 - ii) He also warned about those who would spoil "through philosophy and vain deceit" (Colossians 2:8).
 - iii) He further told Titus of the "many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers" (Titus 1:10).
- c) The concluding thoughts
 - i) The Devil's greatest influencers are such, not because of their grasp of the truth or because of their closeness to the Lord, but because of their great ability in the areas of personality and communication.
 - ii) Let that truth sink in for just a moment and ponder the thought that many with these characteristics today are not the isolated and rejected false teachers trying to find their ways into the churches, but are the pastors, evangelists, and missionaries of our day.

(2) They allure.

- a) Through the lusts of the flesh
- b) Through much wantonness
 - i) The word *wanton* appears three times in scripture (Isaiah 3:16; 1 Timothy 5:11; James 5:5) and the word *wantonness* appears twice (Romans 13:13; 2 Peter 2:18).
 - ii) It depicts something wicked, but more specifically it involves a lack of restraint. This is most easily seen in James 5:5 where wantonness is described as nourishing one's heart uncontrollably as in a day of slaughter.
- c) Note: This is an odd situation. These false teachers apparently use carnal appetites to draw men to error. This should again remind us that their converts are those who, like them, only made a profession of faith, but possessed no true and lasting salvation.

b. Their targets—"those that were clean escaped from them who live in error"



2. Their promise (2 Peter 2:19)
 - a. The hope in their promise—"they promise them liberty"
 - (1) To many, the Christian life is seen as a rigid or narrow life that offers no liberty. Factually, there is no liberty outside of a Christian life.
 - (2) The promise is that a departure from the doctrines of God and of the church will yield immediate liberty to the one who has been held captive.
 - b. The emptiness of their promise—"they themselves are the servants of corruption"; Note: This again testifies of the lost condition of these false teachers. The saved person WAS the servant of sin but is now the servant of righteousness (Romans 6:14-22).
3. Their demise (2 Peter 2:19-22)
 - a. Their bondage (2 Peter 2:19-20)
 - (1) The principle of bondage (2 Peter 2:19)
 - a) Of whom a man is overcome
 - b) Of the same is he brought in bondage
 - c) Note: The reason why the false teachers could not continue their altered behaviour is because all along their nature was in bondage and under servitude to corruption.
 - (2) The account of their bondage (2 Peter 2:20)
 - a) Temporarily, their knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ caused them to escape the pollutions of the world.
 - b) After some time, they were again entangled in the pollutions of the world.
 - c) They were not only entangled but were overcome.
 - b. Their worsening (2 Peter 2:20-21)
 - (1) The declaration of their worsening—"the latter end is worse with them than the beginning" (2 Peter 2:20)
 - (2) The avoidance of their worsening—"it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness" (2 Peter 2:21): Note: It is not that ignorance is bliss, but that knowledge rejected brings greater consequences (Luke 12:46-48).
 - (3) The cause of their worsening—"after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them" (2 Peter 2:21)
 - c. Their nature (2 Peter 2:22)
 - (1) The illustration of their nature—"according to the true proverb"
 - a) The dog is turned to his own vomit again.
 - b) The sow that was washed turned to her wallowing in the mire.
 - (2) The association of their nature—"it is happened unto them"
 - a) The false teacher temporarily changed his behaviour, but was unable to change his nature.
 - b) Due to the inability to change natures, he eventually returned to his original behaviour.