

## 2 Peter 2:1–22 (NKJV)

But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, *and* bring on themselves swift destruction.<sup>2</sup> And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.<sup>3</sup> By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber.

<sup>4</sup>For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast *them* down to hell and delivered *them* into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment;<sup>5</sup> and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, *one of eight people*, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly;<sup>6</sup> and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned *them* to destruction, making *them* an example to those who afterward would live ungodly;<sup>7</sup> and delivered righteous Lot, *who was* oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked<sup>8</sup> (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented *his* righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing *their* lawless deeds)—<sup>9</sup>*then* the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment,<sup>10</sup> and especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority. *They are* presumptuous, self-willed. They are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries,<sup>11</sup> whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord.

<sup>12</sup>But these, like natural brute beasts made to be caught and destroyed, speak evil of the things they do not understand, and will utterly perish in their own corruption,<sup>13</sup> *and* will receive the wages of unrighteousness, as those who count it pleasure to carouse in the daytime. *They are* spots and blemishes, carousing in their own deceptions while they feast with you,<sup>14</sup> 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.<sup>15</sup> They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the *son* of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;<sup>16</sup> but he was rebuked for his iniquity: a dumb donkey speaking with a man's voice restrained the madness of the prophet.<sup>17</sup> These are wells without water, clouds carried by a tempest, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.

<sup>18</sup>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.<sup>19</sup> 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.<sup>20</sup> For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning.<sup>21</sup> For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them.<sup>22</sup> But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: “A dog returns to his own vomit,” and, “a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire.”

**Interpretation:** *Read through the passage, and then review and make notes under the questions below.*

1. What makes false teachers dangerous? What do verses 1–3 describe as the source of the real threat to the church?  
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2. What is the common theme that connects the various examples Peter cites in vv. 4–8? How does this theme support the statement of v. 9?  
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3. Why is the contrast between the false teachers (v. 10) and angels (v. 11) appropriate in this context? Explain.  
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4. How does Peter describe the false teachers in verses 12–17? Do these descriptions emphasize their teachings or their conduct? Identify some of Peter’s most striking statements and reflect on what actions by the false teachers must have led him to these conclusions.  
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5. Why is it appropriate for Peter to say that the false teachers speak “great swelling words of emptiness” (v. 18)?  
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6. In verse 19, Peter describes the false teachers as “slaves of corruption” who bring others into “bondage.” Explain how following false teaching would be “bondage.”  
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7. In verse 22, Peter quotes the graphic statements of Prov. 26:11 as a support for what he says in verse 21. How does this proverb illustrate Peter’s point, and why is it an appropriate comparison?  
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**Application:** *Take time to reflect on the implications of 2 Peter 2:1–22 for your own life today.*

8. What does this passage mean for your walk with the Lord?  
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9. How does this passage challenge the way you think about situations in daily life? What should you do about that?  
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