

2 Peter 2:10-11
October 1, 2017

Open with Prayer

HOOK:

Q: In order to set up a Facebook account, what information is asked for so your friends can see?
[Profile: About, From, Education, Where you work, areas of interest...]

Q: When you're choosing a doctor, what sorts of things do you want to know about him or her?
[experience, board certified in specialty areas, where they got their schooling]

It's helpful to have a thumbnail sketch of the people we interact with or listen to via media or whatever. If you hear someone who grabs your interest, perhaps you start Googling the name and find Wikipedia to learn more about that person. These are profiles.

Transition: Peter is providing a "profile" for his readers, for us. He wants us to be aware of what a false teacher looks like. What are some of the descriptors? So by time we leave class today, **we should be able to detect a false teacher BY recognizing their ATTRIBUTES.** Let's begin.

BOOK (NIV 1984):

V.10:

- This is especially true of those who **follow the corrupt desire of the sinful nature and despise authority.** **Bold and arrogant,** these men are **not afraid to slander celestial beings;**

V.11:

- yet even angels, although they are stronger and more powerful, do not bring slanderous accusations against such beings in the presence of the Lord.

Process Observations/Questions:

Q V.10: What is the first ATTRIBUTE of a false teacher written by Peter?

- Follow the corrupt ("pollution, defilement") desire of the sinful nature – What does he mean by that? [Like Sodom and Gomorrah, they indulged the flesh. Anything goes.]
- Despise authority – What does he mean by that? [The depraved nature of man does not want to submit to any kind of authority.]
- Bold and arrogant – What does he mean by that? [Man's fallen nature encourages pride. When the ego is at stake, these apostates will stop at nothing in order to promote and protect themselves.]
- not afraid to slander celestial beings – What does he mean by that? [False teachers were brazen enough to do things **even angels** wouldn't do, namely, slander such beings.]

Observation: When it comes to the unrighteous, the Lord especially deals with those who follow the corrupt desire of the sinful nature and despise authority. Bold and arrogant, these men are not afraid to slander celestial beings. We know in Proverbs that the Lord detests pride and a lying tongue, so it's not surprising for Peter to highlight false teachers as ones the Lord especially deals with.

LOOK:

We will do well to heed Peter's warning against false teachers. He's given us a heads up on the attributes to look for to help us ferret them out. As Christians, we can wage spiritual warfare more effectively if we know our spiritual enemies, the techniques they use, and the end result of their deception.

Close in Prayer

Commentaries for Today's Lesson:

Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Vol. 2, pp. 451–452). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

2 Peter 2:10–16

Peter is not yet finished with the apostates! Unlike some believers today, Peter was disturbed by the inroads the false teachers were making into the churches. He knew that their approach was subtle but their teachings were fatal, and he wanted to warn the churches about them.

Remember, however, that Peter opened this letter with positive teaching about salvation, Christian growth, and the dependability of the Word of God. He had a balanced ministry, and it is important that we maintain that balance today. When Charles Spurgeon started his magazine, he named it *The Sword and Trowel*, alluding to the workers in the Book of Nehemiah, who kept their swords in one hand and their tools in the other as they were repairing the walls of Jerusalem.

Some people have a purely negative ministry and never build anything. They are too busy fighting the enemy! Others claim to be "positive," but they never defend what they have built. Peter knew that it was not enough only to attack the apostates; he also had to give solid teaching to the believers in the churches.

In this section of his letter, Peter condemned the apostates for three specific sins.

Their Reviling (2 Peter 2:10–12)

The picture here is of proud people who try to build themselves up while they try to tear down everybody else. They show no respect for authority and are not afraid to attack and defame people in high positions.

God has established authority in this world, and when we resist authority, we are resisting God (Rom. 13:1ff). Parents are to have authority over their children (Eph. 6:1–4) and employers over their employees (Eph. 6:5–8). As citizens, we Christians should pray for those in authority (1 Tim. 2:1–4), show respect to them (1 Peter 2:11–17), and seek to glorify God in our behavior. As members of a local assembly, we should honor those who have the spiritual rule over us and seek to encourage them in their ministry (Heb. 13:7, 17; 1 Peter 5:1–6).

Human government is, in one sense, God's gift to help maintain order in the world, so that the church may minister the Word and win the lost to Christ (1 Tim. 2:1–8). We should pray daily for those in authority so that they might exercise that authority in the will of God. It is a serious thing for a Christian to oppose the law, and he must be sure he is in the will of God when

he does it. He should also do it in a manner that glorifies Christ, so that innocent people (including unsaved government employees) might not be made to suffer.

The reason for their reviling (v. 10). One word gives the reason: *flesh*. The depraved nature of man does not want to submit to any kind of authority. “Do your own thing!” is its insistent message, and many people follow it. In recent years, there has been an epidemic of books that encourage people to succeed at any cost, even to the extent of hurting or intimidating others. The important thing, according to these books, is to take care of yourself—“number one”—and to use other people as tools for the achievement of your own selfish goals.

Man’s fallen nature encourages pride. When the ego is at stake, these apostates will stop at nothing in order to promote and protect themselves. Their attitude is completely opposite that of our Lord who willingly emptied Himself to become a servant, and then died as a sacrifice for our sins (see Phil. 2). These men that Peter described were *presumptuous*, which means they were “very daring and bold” in the way they spoke about those in positions of dignity. There is a boldness that is heroic, but there is also a boldness that is satanic.

These men were also *self-willed*, which means they “lived to please only themselves.” They were arrogant and would even defy God to get what they wanted! Proverbs 21:24 describes them perfectly. While outwardly, they appeared to serve God and minister to the people, *inwardly* they fed their own egos and feathered their own nests.

In their arrogance, “they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities [glorious ones].” While the immediate reference is probably to “exalted ones” in places of authority, the angels may also be in view here, since in the next verse Peter referred to the angels. These apostates revile even the angels! And they do not even tremble when they do it! They are so secure in their pride, that they even dare God to judge them.

The seriousness of their reviling (v. 11). The angels are reviled by the apostates, but the apostates are not reviled by the angels! Even the angels, though greater in strength and power, will not intrude into a sphere that is not their own. The angels remember the rebellion of Lucifer and know how serious it is to revolt against God’s authority. If God judged the rebellious angels, how much more will He judge rebellious men!

The suggestion here is that the godly angels do not even speak against the *fallen* angels. They have left all judgment to the Lord. We will learn more about this when we study Jude, for he mentions this matter of the angels in Jude 8–9.

Speaking evil of others is a great sin, and the people of God must avoid it. We may not respect the people in office, but we must respect the office, for all authority is God-given. Those who revile government officials in the name of Christ ought to read and ponder Titus 3:1–2—“Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed, to malign no one, to be uncontentious, gentle, showing every consideration for all men”.

When Daniel refused the king’s food, he did it in a gracious way that did not get his guard into trouble (Dan. 1). Even when the Apostles refused to obey the Sanhedrin’s order that they stop preaching in the name of Jesus, they acted like gentlemen. They respected the authority even though they disobeyed the order. It is when the flesh goes to work that pride enters in, and then we use our tongues as weapons instead of tools. “The words of his mouth are iniquity and deceit: he hath left off to be wise, and to do good” (Ps. 36:3).

Raymer, R. M. (1985). 1 Peter. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures (Vol. 2, pp. 871-872). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

B. Description of false teachers (2:10–16)

False teachers will be judged by God, as certainly as were the angels, the world in Noah’s day, and the sinful people of Sodom and Gomorrah. In verses 10–16 (also v. 17) Peter described the true nature of the false teachers plaguing the church in the first century.

1. THEY ARE REBELLIOUS (2:10–12a)

2:10–12a. The apostles and teachers emphasized purity and cleanliness before God. But the false teachers in the church who denied these standards demonstrated their desire to be indulging the flesh (**follow the corrupt** [*miasmou*, “pollution, defilement”] **desire of the sinful nature**), like the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, and did so in a spirit which held **authority** in contempt (cf. Jude 16, 18). But this was not just any authority; these reckless antinomians **despise** (d) (*kataphronountas*, “think down on”) “lordship.” *Kyriotētos*, “authority,” refers either to angelic powers (Eph. 1:21; Col. 1:16) or perhaps more likely, to the authority of the Lord (*kyrios*) Himself (cf. 2 Peter 2:1).

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False teachers were doing things **even angels** would not do, namely, slander **such beings**. One might expect **stronger and more powerful** beings (good angels) to criticize less powerful beings (fallen angels), but that is simply not allowed **in the presence of the Lord** (cf. Jude 8–9). Yet so great was the pride of these slanderers that it knew no bounds in their attack on all who disagreed with their teachings. Even so, they were totally ignorant of the very things they blasphemed (2 Peter 2:12a; cf. Jude 10).