

## False Teachers, Part 2: Their Character and Their Victims

2 Peter 2.10-22

In 2 Peter 2.1-9, we are ‘introduced’ to false teachers: They infiltrate the church, lead Christians astray, and will be punished by God. But the rest of this chapter is a no-holds-barred *exposé* of these spiritual leeches who prey on Christians, and a sobering warning of what happens to those who fall under their influence.

***Like unreasoning animals: The Character of False Teachers (10-17)***

- Reckless, self-willed: *No fear of satanic powers* (10-13)
- Motivated by lust and greed (14-17)

***Worse than the beginning: The Victims of False Teachers (18-22)***

- Re-enslaved to sin from which they had escaped! (18-20)
- Experience a tragic fall from the godly life they once knew (21-22)

**Digging Deeper**

1. 2 Peter 2.10a introduces the character of false teachers: What two general characteristics does Peter highlight? What do these mean?
2. Peter first shows how false teachers *despise authority* in vv10b-13. He says they *do not tremble when they revile angelic authorities*. What is he talking about? (What are *angelic authorities*? See Jude 8-9; Eph. 6.12.) Have you witnessed something like this? What other actions or attitudes in these verses would ‘raise an alarm’ in your mind and suggest that someone might be a false teacher?
3. False teachers are also known as *those who indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires (the lust of uncleanness; vv14-17)*. Have you seen this characteristic in false teachers? No Christian leader is perfect, so how can we discern when a leader is actually a ‘wolf in sheep’s clothing’? The lust for sex, and the love of money, often seem to go hand-in-hand. Why is this?
4. False teachers’ instruction is described as *wells without water and clouds without rain* (17). For those living in the middle east, what would these images have signified? What do true teachers provide that false teachers do not? Can you discern the difference between teaching that gives the *appearance* of being true, but is really false, and teaching that is actually true? How?
5. Not surprisingly, these false teachers do not have success leading mature Christians astray; instead, who do they ‘prey on’ (v14)? How does Peter describe the way they ‘entice’ immature believers to ‘take their bait’ (18-19)? Have you ever experienced this?
6. When a believer is ‘entangled in’ and ‘overcome’ by sin, after having preciously escaped from such a slavery through faith in Jesus Christ, Peter says that the end is worse than the beginning (20), and that *it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness* (21) in the first place! Why is it so tragic when a believer who knows the truth falls back into willful sin? Have you witnessed this tragedy?