

(10b) Bold and willful, they do not tremble as they blaspheme the glorious ones, whereas angels, though great in might and power, do not pronounce a blasphemous judgment against them before the Lord. But these, like irrational animals, creatures of instinct, born to be caught and destroyed, blaspheming about matters of which they are ignorant, will also be destroyed in their destruction, suffering wrong as the wage for their wrongdoing.

(13b) They count it pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are blots and blemishes reveling in their deceptions, while they feast with you. They have eyes full of adultery, insatiable for sin. They entice unsteady souls. They have hearts trained in greed. Accursed children! Forsaking the right way, they have gone astray. They have followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved gain from wrongdoing, but was rebuked for his own transgression; a speechless donkey spoke with human voice and restrained the prophet's madness.

(17) These are waterless springs and mists driven by a storm. For them the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved. For, speaking loud boasts of folly, they entice by sensual passions of the flesh those who are barely escaping from those who live in error. They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption. For whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved.

(20) For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first.

(21) For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them. What the true proverb says has happened to them: "The dog returns to its own vomit, and the sow, after washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire." (~Proverbs 26:11)

Think on these things:

- 1) "Bold and willful" (v. 10b) is NOT a complement. It relates to being reckless and foolhardy. Scholars believe the "glorious ones" seem likely to refer to fallen angels (w/Satan, and "their destruction", v. 12). God's angels, though, do not revile these fallen ones (see Jude 8-9). Yet, the false prophets and teachers spoken about here have no reluctance to speak rebukingly about the fallen angels, though these are far more powerful than human beings (see Acts 19:11-17 and Ephesians 6:12). How does Peter refer to the false prophets, and what will be their end (v. 12)?

- 2) Reading vs. 13b-16, what are two key motivations for these church leaders? Peter refers to them as "blots and blemishes" to the fellowship, saying they have "forsaken the right way."

- 3) Quickly scan the story of Balaam in Numbers 22:7-34 (especially v. 32). Still in Numbers 22, what did God say to Balaam in vs. 12-13? Why did Balaam change his mind (see vs. 15-17)?

4) V. 17 is a condemnation of the value of their messages and teachings in churches. What does Peter compare them to, and what do you think this means? See Jude 11-13.

5) These people are also often guilty of sexual sins “within” the church. Who are they preying on (vs. 14, 18)? Why do you think these victims are so vulnerable to being misled?

6) V. 19 says their message is freedom, but the result of their ministry is enslavement. Why is this?

7) V. 19b is an important definition. What does Peter teach about “enslavement?” Would my issue be the same as your issue?

8) Vs. 20-21 are complicated verses, theologically. Calvinist doctrine (the Church majority) would say these people were never truly saved, that, with time, their unsaved real self becomes clear to the fellowship. Wesleyan-Arminian doctrine (the Church minority) would say that these folks came to faith, and then departed from faith (by their choice) --- and that, in the end, they fall back into God’s judgment for unbelievers. From v. 20, what happened to them to cause their failure? How is their “last state” described? See also a teaching of Jesus in Matthew 12:43-45.

9) When the true nature of their character comes out, to what does Peter compare these false prophets and teachers (v. 22)? Peter’s thoughts seem to mirror a teaching of Jesus (see also Matthew 7:6). It seems that in both citations, there is reference to people who “turn” on us...!

People and situations I want to pray for this week: