

The Ways Of A False Teacher. Continued from page 1.

The False Teacher's Way Is To Forsake The Right Way

“Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray...” (v.15). That “right way” Peter mentions is the “living way” (Heb. 10:20) or “the way” (Jn. 14:6) of Jesus Christ — the teachings of New Testament Christianity.

In this life there is a spiritual choice to be made. “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Matt. 7:13-14). That “strait gate” is salvation through Jesus Christ. The “wide gate” leads away from God toward Hell. False teachers opt for the wrong way by forsaking the right way.

That wrong way is also the “way of Balaam” (v. 15). Like Balaam the false teacher forsakes God's word for money. Even though rebuked by the Angel of the Lord for his lawlessness, Balaam followed money rather than the word of God (cf. Num. 22:32; 1 Tim. 6:10). Likewise modern false teachers forsake the right way by not teaching the necessity of baptism for remission of sins (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38) to make themselves acceptable to the denominational world. Compromising the truth of the Gospel also sells more books and merchandise. Peter describes such a departure as “madness” (v.16).

The False Teacher's Way Is One Of Empty, Inflated Rhetoric

False teachers are “wells without water” (v. 17) who “speak great swelling words of vanity” (v. 18). Their false doctrines make them spiritual wells of lies and deceit. Their teachings are Satan's bait to lure an unwary soul into his trap. They often mask their treachery in flowery language and emotional appeals. “For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple” (Rom. 16:18).

Contrast this with the “living water” (Jn. 4:10) of Jesus Christ, the gospel, which is simple and easily understood. Those who truly proclaim it have no hidden agenda of covetousness. “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ” (Col. 2:8).

The Way Of The False Teacher Is The Way Of Slavery

To those trying to escape sin, the false teacher promises “liberty” (v. 19) or a supposed license to sin. Whenever we devalue the necessity of living a morally upright life we pervert the Gospel.

“For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another” (Gal. 5:13).

Today some false teachers preach a “grace-only” salvation that says that there is nothing we can do to gain salvation, thereby excluding obedience to God. This is merely “cheap grace”. True liberty is the freedom to do God's will — not serve our own selfishness. “But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life” (Rom. 6:22).

The Way Of The False Teacher Is The Way Of Regression

Peter pictures the false teacher as someone who has left “the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (v. 20) and “turned from the holy commandment delivered unto them” (v. 21). In other words they know the truth of the Gospel but have regressed to false doctrine. False doctrine takes a soul backward, not forward to Heaven. “Look to yourselves, that ye lose not the things which we have wrought, but that ye receive a full reward. Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God; he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath the Father and the Son” (2 John 8-9, ASV). The false teacher goes beyond what the Scriptures teach. **Continued on page 3**

BELVEDERE BEACON

“Ye are the light of the world” (Matthew 5:14)

Volume 8

Number 36

September 9, 2007

A PUBLICATION OF THE BELVEDERE CHURCH OF CHRIST

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(Greater Augusta, GA area)

THE WAYS OF A FALSE TEACHER

In the Apostle Peter's second epistle, chapter two, he does not mince words in his denunciation and description of the false teachers/false prophets of his day. “But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption” (2 Pet. 2:12). Whether it was the “Judaizers” who were trying to bind the Law of Moses on the Christians (Acts 15:1) or the “proto-Gnostics” who were beginning to deny that Jesus had a physical body (2 Jn. 7), Peter and the Holy Spirit are reminding us of the destructive way taken by those who depart from New Testament Christianity.

Like a modern day microscope, the Bible reveals to us the way of depravity of the false teacher. And the word of God is as revealing today concerning false teachers as it was 2,000 year ago. “Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do” (Heb. 4:13).

The Way Of The False Teacher Is The Way Of The Irrational

God sees false teachers as they truly are, “as natural brute beasts”(v. 12). He sees them as irrational creatures that “speak evil of the things that they understand not”. Christianity is a rational, objective religion of absolute truth. “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 Thess. 5:21). False doctrine is basically irrational. For example the falsity of “faith-only” salvation is readily apparent to the honest reader of the Bible. “Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only” (Jas. 2:24).

The Way Of A False Teacher Is The Way Of A Spiritual Bum

The false teacher is basically a sensualist who seeks to live in luxury at the expense of others (v. 13). For example many so-called “televangelists” are just professional beggars who either live off “love offerings” of the naive or seek to peddle their books at Wal-Mart to gullible buyers. Behind their masks of piety are lust and covetousness.

False teachers have “a heart trained in covetous practices” (Verse 14, NM). In fact their downfall is often either financial or sexually immoral in nature.

These spiritual bums live off other's weaknesses. “For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts” (2 Tim. 3:6). The dividend or “reward of unrighteousness” (v. 13) of the false teacher will be eternal damnation.

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SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

| SUNDAY: | | WEDNESDAY: |
|----------------------------|-----------|--------------------------------------|
| Bible Classes for all ages | 10.00 am. | Bible Classes for all ages 7.00 p.m. |
| Morning Worship | 11.00 am. | |
| Evening Worship | 6.00 p.m. | |

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Do you ever have dark days? Not cloudy days, or rainy days, or stormy days—dark days? You are not alone; many people have such days, and they are hard. A feeling in the pit of the stomach, a general weariness, a sadness, a feeling of foreboding, basic unrest—dark days. Why do such days come our way? Who knows... Sometimes some of us get them and when we do we find that there is nothing that we can do but struggle through them. The feelings are real—whether justified or not, real no less. The pain is real. We pray, we think, we try to forget those feelings; we hope they will go away never to return—but still, they are there. They are real.

What should we do about them? Understand them—if we can. Seek the source—the root-cause. If it is something that can be resolved, resolve it. Often, however, we find that either we cannot find the cause or that there is no solution to the cause we find. What then? Do the best you can. Talk to someone close to you who may be able to help you. You may need professional help—if you do, seek it out and profit from it. Do not hesitate. Do not be ashamed. Talk to your elders or preacher. The medical profession calls it depression and they have some treatments that can help some people. If you need that help, get it. It just might be that you can escape your dark days, or at the least that the dark days will be lighter and fewer and farther in between.

What should we not do about them? Do not become discouraged. Do not blame God. Do not do anything foolish. If it is clinical depression, you need not even blame yourself. Do not ignore the feelings, because they will most probably not go away by themselves.

If you know someone who is going through dark days, try to help them. But know this: they may not, at the time, appreciate your efforts. The pain they are feeling is such as to distort their entire thought process and while you have only good intentions they may not see it that way. Do not grow impatient with them. Pray for them and with them. Listen to them. Urge them, if need be, to seek help. Be there for them and love them.

As Christians, we look for a time free from dark days—indeed: free from all darkness. Until then, we seek the Light. May God bless you as you study and obey His Word.

*Tim Smith
Dothan, AL*

Editorial Note: Tim Smith is a faithful gospel preacher and good friend of mine. He is now unable to preach as a result of an accident that was not his fault while he was carrying out his work as a preacher about two years ago. He is in constant pain and on a variety of medications and is unable to stand for any period of time. He is awaiting a financial settlement from the insurance company of the person who ran into him. As is often the case, the lawyers are haggling over the amount of compensation since Tim is now unable to work, as a result of the accident. Tim hopes that this will be finalized before the end of the year.

However, in the interim, he and his family are in financial difficulties keeping up with their part of the doctor and medicine bills. His wife is teaching school and, as a result they do have health insurance but they still, with deductibles etc., have about \$700.00 per month for medicines alone (about 30 pills per day). The men here have agreed that an appeal be placed in the bulletin. If you are able to help Tim and his family, on a one-time basis, it would be greatly appreciated. Please make checks payable to the church marked for “Tim Smith, Medical Help.”

Ken Chumbley

NEWS AND NOTES

Keep in your prayers the following: Helen Culpepper, Pam Gossett and mother, Kathy Treadway's mother and Bronwen Gibson's mother (Lavonne McClish) – who has continued health – related issues and who is undergoing pain management therapy, Linda Chumbley is also undergoing pain management therapy; and Rachel Fitzpatrick's aunt (Eula Baker) who has cancer.

Jack Peebles is still in the Mattie C. Hall Care Center in Aiken, room 301. Continue to keep Jack and Jean and their family in your prayers at this difficult time.

Justine Hall's new-born great granddaughter, Mary Ann, is doing some better at MCG.

Myrtle Grimsley is doing better and hopes to be out today.

Dot McLemore, a former member here, recently fell and broke her arm in two places.

Maomi Aaron asked for prayers for her sister who is still having health issues.

Our next potluck will be on September 30 after morning worship. Plan to stay.

The Ways Of A False Teacher. Continued from page 4

Peter sums up God's revulsion for false teachers and their pernicious doctrines in a proverb. “The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire” (v. 22). This is the only time in the New Testament we find the words “vomit,” “sow” and “mire”. God does not want us to have anything to do with false teachers and we should try to get others involved with them out of their grasp. Souls are at stake.

Does the church you attend preach and practice the doctrines found in the New Testament? If not, you are being fed false doctrine and are in fellowship with false teachers (Eph. 5:11). Flee that situation as if your life was in danger and find the church of the New Testament — the church that Jesus built. “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you” (2 Cor. 6:17).

Roelf L. Ruffner, Cheyanne, WY

BAPTIZING THE WALLET

A big man came forward to be baptized. The country church building had no baptistry, so they took him out to a creek. He emptied his pockets to get into the water, but one noticed a lump in his back pocket. “Sir, you forgot to take out your wallet.” The man responded, “I didn't forget. I figure that if I baptize that part of me, then everything will be okay.”

That expresses a great truth. If we are willing to give our possessions to God, then God will most likely have us with them. Too many are possessed by their possessions and are unwilling to part with them for any reason. God owns us, and all that we have is His. We are simply stewards, with the obligations to be found faithful (1 Cor. 4:2).

WILL WE BE?

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