The Tyranny of False Prophets

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[0:00] Last week we covered the first part of one verse in 2 Peter chapter 2, the first portion of verse 1.

! And we answered the question, where do false prophets come from? For the most part, they come from among us. They come from churches. It may not be our church, but they may come to us from another church.
Now tonight I hope to cover the remaining six points that have been raised by the first three verses of 2 Peter chapter 2.
I read these diligently to come up with six questions to answer and I couldn't do it, so then I read John MacArthur and he gave them to me, even though he's in heaven.
So these are the six questions we're going to answer tonight. How do false prophets and false teachers operate?
[1:15] What sacrilege do false prophets commit? Do false prophets and false teachers have any success?

Do false prophets and false teachers have patterns of living and sexual immorality? What is the stigma of false prophets and false teachers?
And how are false prophets and false teachers motivated? You would think by looking at these questions, and I think the answers will verify it, that Peter must look down the corridor of time to our generation and saw some of these charlatans on TV and elsewhere and came up with these.
But first we're going to examine how false prophets and false teachers operate. And according to the scriptures, I'm being very kind, these charlatans operate in secrecy.
They like the shadows. 2 Peter chapter 2, just moving barely in, we call that 1B. We did 1A last week.
[2:38] The passage says, they will secretly introduce destructive heresy. Now we know there are plenty of false teachers on television in our day.

And that point can be readily proven. And they're never honest or straightforward about what they are doing. If they were honest to start with, the vast majority of churches would never embrace them.
And they certainly wouldn't embrace their teaching. So they operate a lot in secret. Well, why do they operate in secret? And I suggest there's two reasons.
Could be more. First, by operating secretly, they're really employing the sin of deception.
They're good at deceiving people. And secondly, by deceiving the church, they are only posing as pastors and teachers.
[3:43] A real pastor, a real teacher, a real elder would not deceive the church. And Jude addressed this. And I love the book of Jude. One chapter. 25 verses.

Half-brother of Jesus. Jude 4. When I say that, that's verse 4. For certain persons have crept in unnoticed.
Those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation. Ungodly persons who turn the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord Jesus Christ.
The Greek word there for crept or crept in means to sneak in under false pretenses.
And that certainly fits this description. They may pose as true shepherds, but they're employed by Satan.
[5:00] They're guided by Satan's demons and Satan's people, humans that are on earth. And they're employed to spread destructive heresies.

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In our passage in 2 Peter, the word destructive heresies, again in the Greek language, the language of the New Testament, means heresies of destruction that lead to utter ruin.
It is used to speak of the eternal condemnation of the wicked. Now the grave danger is that not only will false teachers be eternally condemned, but many people under their false teaching are to be led astray and they're never going to recover from that and they're going to be led astray.
I've got a friend of mine, do you all know the name Bill Johnson at Bethel Church in California? Boy, you talk about a church that's got some air now.
But I've got a good friend of mine that thinks he walks on water. And he takes every opportunity to tell me he walks on water. I say, well, they're going to drown one of these days.
[6:26] But there's no condemnation for him. I should point out that false teachers many times do not openly oppose the Gospel.

They know they're going to come under some criticism if they do that. So they do it subtly. They do it through misrepresentation.
These men are going to hell and they're dragging other people with them. And Peter tells us they operate in secret.
That's how they can get away with it. They operate in secret. And second, we're going to look at their sacrilege.
The next verse in 2 Peter 2, kind of in the middle there. This is sacrilege. They even deny the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.
[7:35] And again, I appeal to the original language. To deny means to refuse, to be unwilling, or to firmly say no.

They're denying Jesus with those descriptives. The truth is that false prophets and false teachers habitually and characteristically reject divine authority.
when Peter says that these men deny the Master, you know, that's no small thing. What he's saying, if you play that out in your mind, they deny the sovereign, ruling authority of the universe.
the Lord Jesus Christ himself, the creator of the universe. And they're in denial of him. You know, I was born just three years following the end of World War II.
When I grew up, in the 50s, we played war. That's all we heard about on TV and from our dads. And I killed more Germans and Japanese than soldiers that were actually in the conflict.
[8:56] That's who we were fighting over on Tuxedo Boulevard in Queenstown. They are in denial.
When World War II ended, a lot of people talked about Hitler.

They still talk about Hitler. I've had people say, you know, well-meaning too, and maybe right, that Hitler must be in the very lowest reaches of hell.
He's got to be right down there with all alone. But I'm going to suggest something. I think those who deny the sovereign lordship of Christ may be even lower.
Maybe they're even lower. It is the supreme sacrilege. How do they commit that sacrilege?
By refusing to submit to the sovereign rule of Christ. If they did submit to that rule, they would, first of all, never teach false doctrine.
[10:12] They wouldn't do it. In fact, they'd be afraid to. And they need to be afraid. Peter also speaks of the master who bought them.

This is a beautiful analogy, of course. This is used in Scripture and even in secular Greek literature to describe the master of the house going to the slave market and purchase slaves who would in turn be assigned important duties in the household.
the master of the slave world. And bought means they have been redeemed out of the marketplace, out of slavery.
Let me tell you something, guys. We've been redeemed out of slavery. Out of slavery to sin. Bought means to redeem out of the marketplace.
And when our passage says that the master bought these false prophets, do not read into that some form of universal salvation.
[11:32] These guys aren't saved. Men and women who deny the sovereign rule of the Lord Jesus will not inherit the kingdom of God.

They simply won't. And that brings up a point that bears mentioning. A few years ago, Dr. MacArthur wrote a book.
Well, actually, he wrote 400 of them. But the one I'm thinking of was the book entitled The Gospel According to Jesus. In that book, which I have and I've read a number of times, he exposes some

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really big-name theologians in our day who have denied the lordship of Christ.
They argue, so it's not an essential. Well, I think it's very essential. And they call this the lordship controversy. It's still going on.
And these men maintain that one could believe in Jesus as Savior, but they don't have to believe in Him as Lord.
[12:53] They don't have to make Him Lord over their life. They could, in the extreme, even reject Him as Lord as long as they proclaim Him as Savior.

And, you know, there's a thread of truth in this. we don't make Him Lord. He is Lord. He is Lord. He doesn't need me to make Him Lord. He is Lord. And by the way, Dr. MacArthur published since then three more books in that series.
The Gospel According to the Apostles, The Gospel According to Paul, and the Gospel According to God. And if you want to borrow any of those or all of them, I've got them all at home.
So let's continue on. Next on our list is the success of these false prophets and false teachers.
[13:57] That's an odd word to use here, but it's in 2 Peter chapter 2, the very first part of the verse. It says, Many will follow.

Guys, these guys got followers. People are following them. And this is consistent with the words of Jesus. In Matthew's Gospel, the Lord had this to say, I'm in chapter 7, verses 13 and 14.
Enter through the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction. And there are many who enter through it. For the gate is narrow and the way is constricted that leads to life and there are few who find it.
I heard a pastor one day describing that. He knew the original language. He said, It's like a mouse hole in a wall. You've got to enter through it. You can't carry anything on your back like in Pilgrim of Progress.
[15:12] Christian couldn't get anywhere because he had this huge bag of sins. He finally figured, I can't get rid of these. How do I get rid of these? And they said, it's like this small little hole and you've got to enter in and it's constricted.

You can't bring your wife and children with you. You've got to go alone. It was an amazing description of the narrow gate.
The narrow gate. And then we have the wide way and it's broad and many, it's a super highway guys, and many are on that.
many are on that. Many more people follow the broad way and that is the way that leads to eternal destruction.
No one who clings to the broad way is going to make it in. They've got to abandon that. Take the next exit and get on the narrow way.
[16:20] Okay. Okay. far less adhere to the narrow way that leads to eternal life than who cling to the broad way which only brings death.

Part of the reason for this is the massive amount of garbage proclaimed by false prophets and false teachers. And they declare that the wide road is the best road.
you can hear some of these guys on television. I don't recommend it. It's like taking slow poison. So I don't recommend it but you can hear them.
And they pretty much have the same message. And they'll say that Broadway is the best. The wide road is best. Plenty of room for all of us. They bring a message that only the wide way leads to independence, personal freedom, and self exaltation.
These people never submit to Christ, not as Savior, and not as Lord. These people that follow them, they've got to escape the false teachers.
[17:42] They've got to get out of a false church and become new creations in Christ. As Jesus was summing up the Sermon on the Mount, and He ends that in Matthew chapter 7, He said this, very familiar, you all know it by heart.

Matthew 7 verse 21, Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven. Okay, Lord, who's going to go in?
He who does the will of my Father who is in heaven will enter. And elsewhere it says, questions asked, what's the will of the Father?
To believe in Him who He sent. To believe and trust in His Son. Insincere claims of belonging to Christ are meaningless.

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And they won't get anyone anywhere. They won't do it. When a person truthfully submits to the Lordship of Christ and seeks to obey His will, they are demonstrating that they belong to Him.
[19:07] Well, we come to another one interesting too. false prophets and false teachers, they operate with sensuality. That's an amazing word.

I found out that's several places in the Bible. Most people probably don't think it's in there. You can look at a concordance and find it. Sensuality refers to habitual sexual immorality.
as a habit. The Greek word for this conduct in our passage is in the plural. That means the sensuality spoken of comes in many forms and many extremes.
these people do not place any restraints on their conduct or their fleshly desires.
Now, Jude spoke of this. I love his book. Isn't that brief but amazing book that bears his name? I read verse 4 earlier and now I'll do it again along with verse 7.
[20:25] For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord Jesus Christ.

And then in verse 7, Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.
You know, don't ever get your theology from secular television. They were showing, they thought they'd found Sodom and Gomorrah. And they're digging and they're doing all this archaeological work and everything.
And it was really interesting except at the end, the announcer said, now Sodom and Gomorrah was destroyed, but a lot of people say it was destroyed because of the practice of homosexuality, and we know God wouldn't do that because God made them homosexuals and he loves them, and so this was just a freak of nature, you know, meteor shower or whatever, and I mean, it just totally wiped out the whole thing.
I couldn't get it turned off fast enough. strange flesh. Sensuality is a distinguishing mark of spiritual counterfeits.
[22:09] And I'll tell you, these guys really are, how many of these guys have fallen through that error and fallen with women or men in their church?

A lot of them. Well, they also have a stigma, and because of them, the way of the truth will be maligned.
The stigma of false prophets and false teachers is the truth maligned. I have a lot of books at home. Unfortunately, I now have more books than I can ever read in my lifetime. Diane likes to point that out. One such book is by a theologian named R.C.H.
Linsky, and I've got one of his books, and he said this, true Christianity is blasphemed, is reviled, cursed, condemned by outsiders who see professed Christians running to all manner of excesses.
[23:34] If that is Christianity, they will say, well, curse it when many follow such excesses, outsiders are unable to distinguish and so blaspheme the whole thing.

These false exponents seem true products of the way to them. Linsky is difficult to read, but he was a brilliant man, and he understood just what Peter was warning about.
By their deception, the false teachers have maligned the gospel of Christ. That word maligned can be translated from the original language as blasphemed, slandered, and defamed.
And in this case, all three words apply. False prophets and false teachers receive their marching orders from Satan.
He seeks to undermine churches or whole denominations from within. And he does so by introducing deception into what's being taught.
[24:55] He teaches blatantly false doctrine as the real thing. Believers in the church must be steadfast in their doctrine and in their teaching.

That presupposes that the leadership and most of the members in the church can distinguish truth from error. Now, I don't on purpose listen a lot to Joel Osteen, I can promise you.
If I do, it only takes a couple of moments to hear error and sometimes damning error and sometimes before I rush over there on my knees and try to change the channel, the camera will pan the audience.
There are 35,000 people on any given Sunday in his building, in his auditorium. 35,000 people.

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Where do they come from? Well, of course, the short answer is the Houston area and there's a lot of people to draw from, but they have 35,000 people in there and two of them, I won't mention names, were former members from here that got moved to Houston and Diane and I had lunch with them a few years ago and the wives huddled up in the gossip corner and I visited with the man, we're good friends, he's a good guy, and I said to him, what are you doing in that church with Joel Osteen?
[26:51] He said, keeping peace in the family. he said, I have a unique way to turn it off in my head, but he said, my wife says, I'm going whether you go or not.

So he's got a real problem on his hands. I don't know if they still go there or not. Churches need to strive for doctrinal purity.
We should, you know, I've actually heard people say, well, I'll be even more frank with you. Our former pastor, Dr. McBride, good guy.
He ran into a former staff guy. He wasn't on his staff before and he had started a church. And Dr. McBride asked him, he said, what's your doctrine? And he said, we don't have any doctrine. Doctrine divides. We never mention doctrine.
[27:58] Guys, let me tell you something. Doctrine is the glue that holds us all together. Because we believe in right doctrine, we believe in the deity of Christ, we believe in the three persons of the Trinity, and I could go on and on and on and on.

That's doctrine, that holds us all together. And church members must live lives that reflect Christ. We would do well here to pay attention to the words of Paul to the Philippian church.
This is Philippians chapter 2 verse 15. Be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation among whom you appear as lights in the world. Is it possible that we are living in the most perverse generation that ever existed on earth? Here's the wise counsel that Paul gave Titus.
hold fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching so he will be able both to exhort he's talking about teachers and elders and he will be able to exhort in sound doctrine and this is how he closes that verse and to refute those who contradict sound doctrine to challenge them to challenge them and we also have a sustaining motive for these guys in their greed they will exploit you with false words they will extort you exploit you when I say you
[30:15] I'm not talking about you guys but the weak brother the weak family the people that haven't made a full command yet to Christ are considering it they're at risk of being exploited with false words what is the driving force behind the error of false teachers teachers well we've mentioned several errors that fascinate false teachers but in and of themselves they're not the driver behind the lies the motivation for false teachers when you boil it all down is money that drives them that drives them and you can see that ad nauseam on television all those guys are driven by greed and by money and Peter calls it greed in their greed they will exploit you think about that in our day we have bible preachers by the way I have those in italics and that means I would never call them that because they're not who have accumulated for themselves hundreds of millions of dollars and they're spending it on themselves

Kenneth Copeland has a fleet of aircraft he's a pilot he's got a fleet of aircraft he's got a mega million dollar mansion on a large estate and he's got a runway for his business jet 40 million dollars by the way and he lands and he can pull right up next door to his home into his hangar and he has this fleet of aircraft three or four of them Copeland says that God has blessed him with these things he hasn't Copeland gets his money from widows on fixed incomes who are sending him her tithe and he's got them by the millions that word greed that Peter uses here in the original language translates an uncontrolled covetous desire for money and wealth now we're eventually going to get to 2 Peter chapter 2 verse 14
I don't know when but there Peter says these men have a heart trained in greed they've been trained in greed they have a PhD in it our passage also tells us that they are experts at exploiting people with false words that means they traffic in lies and they exist to build people out of their money well how do they exploit people they do it with false words and why do they do it to enrich themselves these guys enrich themselves there's a warning to us in the book of Acts very appropriate Dr.
Luke wrote this down but it was word spoken by the apostle Paul and he was speaking a warning to the Ephesian elders and I'm going to close with this be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers you can plug in there elders to shepherd the

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church of God which he purchased with his own blood I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you not sparing the flock and from among your own selves men will arise speaking perverse things to draw away the disciples after them therefore be watchful remembering that night and day for a period of three years
I did not cease to admonish each one with tears and now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified that's the charge that Paul gave to the Ephesian elders on this occasion and what a charge that is you

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