

---

---

# Sermon Notes

March 3, 2024

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

---

## Portrait of a False Teacher

2 Peter 2:1-3

### Error

- ❖ Error and false teaching are alive and well within the American church
  - many who profess both faith in Christ and belief in the Bible do not actually know what the Bible teaches about the essentials of the faith
  - such observations are sad but not surprising
- ❖ Jesus warned His followers about the way false teachers would come in His name
  - wolves dressed in sheep's clothing
  - Apostles like Peter, John, Paul and Jude persistently warn the church about the danger of false teaching
- ❖ We have much to learn from the way Peter tackles this massively important theme

### False Teachers

- ❖ False teaching is destructive and those who dabble in it will ultimately BE destroyed
  - there is a world of difference between false and true prophets

- true prophets speak the words of God and point to Christ
- false prophets speak their own ideas and point to themselves
- Peter connects the prevalence of false prophets in the OT with those false teachers who will continue to plague the church in every generation
  - OT false prophets tell people what they want to hear by delivering a message of peace and prosperity
  - false teachers in every age scorn the idea that God holds judgment in store for all who oppose Him
- ❖ Where does Peter get his information about false teachers?
  - Peter quotes the warning Jesus gives about what lies ahead for the church (Matthew 24:3-5, 11; Mark 13:22)
  - the words of Jesus are also reinforced by Paul (Acts 20:29-30, 2 Timothy 3:1-5)
    - *the last days* refers to the entire period between Jesus' return to heaven and His second coming
    - until Jesus returns, His church will be subject to attack by false teachers
- ❖ What should we know about false teachers?
  - what they do, they do deceptively and secretly
    - they infiltrate the church (Galatians 2:4)
    - they wrap their lies with "just enough" truth to make them sound right
    - the health and wealth preachers of our day who pick and choose Scriptures and take them out of context in order to make their points
  - they present destructive heresies

- they even denying the Master who bought them!
- doctrinal error + licentious lifestyle
- they are greedy
  - exploit you with false words
  - example of popular TV preachers and conference speakers of our day
- the end of those who fall prey to their teaching is destruction
  - the eternal loss of fellowship with God in an eternal hell
  - living in denial about the fact of Jesus' return does not change the fact that He IS coming back to rescue His own and punish His enemies
- they will be popular
  - many will follow their depraved, promiscuous examples
  - it is both disheartening and appalling to see how easily so many get "sucked in" by all this in our day
  - the impact of the false teaching that goes on within the church of Jesus Christ is devastating

### Where Do We Draw the Line?

- ❖ "What actually constitutes 'false teaching'?"
  - not all Christians agree about everything (*e.g.* method, mode, timing of baptism; sequence of events surrounding Christ's return; sign gifts of the Holy Spirit; significance and symbolism of the Lord's Supper; Bible translations)
  - Paul's example of eating meat sacrificed to idols

- ❖ "In essentials unity. In nonessentials charity."
  - we hold tenaciously to what the Bible unequivocally deems essential doctrine (our doctrinal statement)
  - we accept one another's differing conclusions in areas where the Bible defaults to personal conviction
  - our Covenant of Church Membership gives a code of conduct that guides us toward godliness and holy living
  - the REAL meaning of TOLERANCE
- ❖ We must always be ready to look within and remove whatever needs to be pulled out by the roots from our own lives and from within our fellowship
  - Peter's words are not meant to condemn the world but to protect the purity of church (*cf.* Ephesians 5:25-27)
  - we need to stand firmly on the foundation of absolute truth

### Personal Reflection

1. Where or when have you seen the presence and effects of false teaching in action? Have you ever been "taken in" by false teaching? What was the end result of such error?
2. Are there any ways in which you may be prone or predisposed to "buy into" the message of false teachers? (perhaps to "keep the peace" or to prevent disruption in a relationship with a friend or family member?) How will you need to safeguard yourself from any such tendency?
3. Review the doctrinal statement of our congregation. If you do not have a copy at home, view it online at [fccpomfret.org](http://fccpomfret.org). Are you in complete agreement with each of the doctrinal points it includes? Why or why not? How comfortable are you to accept the differing conclusions others in our fellowship hold about questions and concerns that lie outside the scope of this statement?