

THE EXAMINER



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The Latter End Is Worse - By Bill Cavender, Port Arthur, Texas

The **second epistle of Peter** was written shortly before his death. **(1:14.)** It was written to remind the brethren of: the exceeding great and precious promises of which they were partakers, **(1:4)**; the conditions upon which the promises were to be obtained, **(1:5-14)**; the grounds of their faith in the promises **(1:16-21)**; and the final state of those who, having embraced the promises, turned from them to again live in the pollutions of the world, **(2:20-22)**. Peter also deals with the characteristics of false teachers who would turn men from the truth, **(2:1-19)**; the certain punishment awaiting these false teachers, **(2:3-9, 13)**; and refutes the particular error of the false teachers of whom he wrote, their error being a denial of the coming of Christ. **(1:16; 3:1-18.)**

Those who are the partakers of the spiritual blessings of God become such by the knowledge of His will. **(1:3)**. After becoming Christians we begin a life of continual growth and development, resulting in the virtues of courage knowledge, self-control, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and love. Our entrance into

the eternal kingdom of God is dependent upon this development. **(1:5-11)**. Christians who are not busily engaged in study, worship and the good works necessary for growth are blind and susceptible to stumbling and falling away, resulting in the loss of heaven to such a one. **(1:9-10)**.

Peter reminded the brethren of these matters and re-stated to them the grounds upon which they had embraced the doctrines of Christ, especially that of his second coming. **(1:12-15; 3:1-2)**. These proofs were twofold:

- (1) the words of the apostles, who were eyewitnesses of the majesty and glory of Christ, **(1:16-18; 3:2)**;
 - (2) the secure and undeniable words of prophecy which had foretold these matters long before Jesus came the first time. The prophecies were not of private (human) interpretation (origin), that is, they did not originate with the prophets who spoke them, but the prophets spoke as the Holy Spirit directed them. **(1:19-21.)**
- In every generation there have been

those who have turned from the faith. Various reasons are given in the scriptures as to why this happens, among them being negligence, indifference, overt and secret sin, love of the world, love of money, love of power and pre-eminence, exaltation of human wisdom and reasoning above the will of God, and open denial of the doctrine of the apostles. Involved in many cases of apostasy is the influence of false teachers and their false doctrines. This was true among the people to whom Peter addressed his second epistle and it is true now. **(2:1)** The tragic consequences are that the false teachers are lost, those who are influenced by them are lost, the truth is evil spoken of, and Christ is put to open shame. **(2 Peter 2:1-2; Heb. 6:6; 10:29.)**

Peter informed the brethren of the characteristics of these false teachers who would lead them astray. We can see the same characteristics in false teachers today, both in and out of the church. **(2:3-19)**. They used deceitful words to get money and property from people, **(vs. 3, 14)**; sneakily and underhandedly they brought in their heresies, **(vs. 1)** walked in the lust of the flesh, despised authority, were presumptuous and self-willed, and hesitated not to speak evil of those having authority, **(vs. 10)**; acted as brute beasts in fulfilling their fleshly appetites, and spoke evil of things of value and worth of which they had

no appreciation nor understanding, **(vs.12)**; amused themselves by living in riotousness and luxury, **(vs.13)**; looked with lascivious hearts on females, enticed unstable people to sin, and had studied and learned the art of cheating people of their goods by religious pretenses, **(vs.14)**; were dishonest and imitated Baalam, who for money would have cursed the people of God, **(vs.15-16)**; spoke pompous words, and empty, bombastic statements, drawing attention to their own intelligence and setting aside the will of the Lord, causing those who were trying to break their evil habits to engage in the fulfillment of fleshly desires, **(vs.18)**; promised their followers liberty to gratify their passions when they, themselves, were in bondage-bondage to their own lusts, **(vs.19)**. Peter compared them to wells without water and violent clouds which brought destruction but no rain. **(vs.17.)** Nothing but certain destruction awaits such teachers and all who believe in and follow them. **(2:1-3, 9, 12-13, 17.)** God is able and He will punish them just as surely as He punished the angels that sinned, the wicked of Noah's generation, and the evil people of Sodom and Gomorrha. **(vs.4-6.)** And just as certain is the deliverance and salvation of those who remain steadfast and unmovable in the service of God. **(vs.7-9; 1 Cor. 15:58)**. Concerning both false

teachers and those deceived by them, Peter said, "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire." (2 Peter 2:20-22.)

The Pollutions Of The World

When one becomes a Christian, he escapes the pollutions of the world." The Greek word miasmata, here translated pollutions, is a medical term which was used in ancient times by physicians concerning the unwholesome odors which emanated from rotting and decaying matter, such as stagnant water, decaying bodies, etc.; and to denote the foul odors which accompanied various bodily diseases, resulting in the spread of disease to others. Macknight says, "it signified the infection of the plague. It is here used to denote sin in general; but more especially the sin of lasciviousness, on account of the infectious nature and destructive consequences." (Commentary, page 638). Therefore, the picture

presented here is of the world lying as one huge, decomposing swamp or body, which emits its terrible stench and infects and pollutes everyone who comes into it. The people to whom Peter wrote had formerly been defiled by this plague for the "time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries." (1 Peter 4:3.) Paul describes the same condition when he said, "Who being past feeling, have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness." (Eph. 4:19.) For such ones - ones who have escaped the plague and death brought about by the infection and defilement of a putrid world-who are again ensnared and entangled by the world, the latter end is worse than the beginning.

Why Is The Latter End Worse?

Other passages in the New Testament give us further insight into the condition of people who have been polluted again in the world. Paul said, "For as touching those who were once enlightened and tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the age to come, and then fell away, it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh,

and put him to an open shame." (Heb. 6:4-6.) Again he said, "Of how much sorer punishment, think ye, shall he be judged worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" (Heb. 10:26-31.) (See also 1 Tim. 4:1-3.) Considering these passages along with 2 Peter 2:20-22, we see many of the reasons why the latter end is worse than the beginning. Some of these are:

- (1) Such persons are fallen away, their conscience is seared and the word of God no longer has influence in their lives. Their hearts are hardened against the Lord and there is no other means by which they can be reached. (Heb. 10:26.)
- (2) Greater knowledge and opportunities bring greater responsibilities to the individual and thus heavier punishment is the lot of those who abandon the knowledge, opportunities and obligations that are theirs. (Matt. 11:20-24; 13:1-23; 25:1-13; 14-30; Luke 12:41-48; James 3:1.)
- (3) Such usually become much worse than they were before learning the truth. They are no longer bound by any restraint. They desire to show others that they now make no pretense of faith in Christ. They are now willing to openly oppose and shame His cause when, beforehand, such had not been a matter of concern to them.

The tragic condition of fallen Christians is pictured by the use of an ancient proverb. (2 Peter 2:22.) It is true that a dog, having vomited, will turn again and eat that which he has ejected. And it is also true that a hog, having been washed, will turn again and wallow in the mire. The dog was cleansed inwardly, the sow was cleansed outwardly. Both returned and partook of their filth again. So it is with many Christians. Our souls are purified and the old body of sin is crucified in our obedience to the truth. (1 Peter 1:22-25; Rom. 6:1-7.) We are new creatures in Christ. (2 Cor. 5:17.) But many who are thus inwardly and outwardly cleansed, like the dog and the hog, return again to their former state. The condition of such a one is worse than it was before ever that person heard of the truth.

All Christians are subjected to temptations. All are liable to err. It is possible for sin to overcome any who are not constantly watchful against it. We should all "take heed, lest haply there shall be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief, in falling away from the living God" (Heb. 3:12.) For such who do fall away, the latter end is worse than the beginning. — Via Truth Magazine

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<p>The Devil Evil angels False prophet The beast Evil men</p>	<p>Eternal Conscious Torment</p> <p>Tormented day & night forever Smoke of torment forever No rest day or night Eternal punishment Away from God's presence</p> <p>Rev 14:11 Rev 20:10 Rev 20:15 Mt 25:41,46 2 Thess 1:9 Hades: Luke 16:19-31</p>	<p>LAKE OF FIRE</p> 
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