

It's Counterfeit
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Turn in your Bibles to 2 Peter 2:1-3. Let me back up to verse 20 of chapter 1: *Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.*

Our Father, we ask You again in Jesus' name, in the power of the Holy Spirit, that You would speak to our hearts. Lord, what a treasure that we have in our hands — that Word of the eternal God, that Word that changes not. We thank You, our Father, that we can rest and trust its truthfulness. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Tonight, I will entitle my message, "It's Counterfeit." The book of 2 Peter was written to warn believers concerning the apostasy. *Apostasy* means *departure from* or *fallen away*. Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 4:1: *Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;* Now there never has been a time on this earth when God has not had a witness. There never has been. That is something you need to understand. There never has been a time on this earth that God has not had His witness. 1 Timothy 4:1: *Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;*

In the book of Jude, the Scripture tells us that He gave the Word of God. Let me read it to you briefly. Jude 3: *Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once (This once is for all.) delivered unto the saints.* God gave us His Word in the days of the apostles. He will not give it again. He has not added to it, and it is once for all delivered. You and I are commanded to earnestly contend for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints. He gave it to us. We are to stand for it. We are not to be contentious, but we are to contend. That is the word that is used in the range when a fellow defends his title. Paul writes about that. There are times when Peter writes the entire epistle concerning the matter of apostasy. 2 Timothy 3 deals with the apostasy. The epistle of 2 John deals with the apostasy. 1 John deals with it in 1 John 2:18, but we have a whole book given to the matter of the apostasy. In 2 Peter 1, fools give them things that prepare them for the apostasy.

NUMBER ONE, CONSIDER THE MATTER OF A LIVING FAITH, ANCHORED IN THE CROSS.

He talks about a living Lord, and then he tells about adding to our faith a growing faith. The matter of these things will keep us from being idle and unfruitful. God gave us the Word of God, a sure foundation. Tonight, we are going to look at 2 Peter 2 which deals with this matter of apostasy. They are everywhere. How do you detect them? Are they in some other city? They are in every city. We have to perk up our ears now. In 2 Peter 2:1, there were false prophets also among the people. Now, there was a holy man of God in 2 Peter 1:21. He said that there were false prophets also side by side among the people even as there could be false teachers among you. Now you do not need to worry about false prophets today. A man who comes along and tries to utter prophecy today will make a liar out of himself because of what he utters. If he is a prophet of God, he would utter it one hundred percent correct, and if he is a prophet of God, he would not open his mouth and utter a prophecy because God said *Amen* in Revelation 22:21. There are false teachers everywhere. Peter talks about false prophets and false teachers.

Satan is a master counterfeiter. The Bible talks about false apostles in 2 Corinthians 11. Matthew 13:38 talks about false Christians. Galatians 6 talks about a false gospel and about a false righteousness. Satan will present to the world a false Christ. Now folks, religion is easy. It is comfortable and popular. Jeremiah cried about this in Jeremiah 5:30-31: *A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?* "How terrible and awful!" Jeremiah said. Some people think it is wrong to expose error

and warn God's people of apostasy. Some people think that is wrong. Some people say, "I will never say anything against anybody's religion." Jesus did. The prophets did. The apostles did. The Word of God does. Did you know the greatest enemy of Christianity is religion? Do not classify Christianity as religion. Religion is the greatest enemy of the gospel. It was religion that betrayed the Son of God. Religion is never used in a good sense except in one place, and that is in James 1. Some people say, "You ought not to ever say anything against anybody's religion." Elijah laughed at them. They said, "Maybe your God is asleep. Maybe he has gone off on a journey. Cry a little louder." He mocked them. The New Testament is filled with warnings about apostasy and apostates. A preacher cannot be true to his calling and ignore those portions of Scripture. A preacher is suppose to preach the whole counsel of God. That is why it is better to preach verse by verse and chapter by chapter because you do not leave out anything. You preach the whole business, and you declare the whole counsel of God. False prophets — it is counterfeit. Look at Matthew 7. I could give you many verses tonight, but I will try to be charitable. Matthew 7:15: *Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.* People think that Jesus was so loving that he never offended anybody. You have never read the Word of God. His greatest denunciation was against religious leaders. Matthew 23. Oh my, how He cut to the heart! He did not do it because He was angry at them; he did it to expose them that they may turn from their sin instead of hiding behind their sin. He pulled the veil off. Matthew 7:15-20: *Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. (They are dressed like sheep, but inside they are wolves.) Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.* Christians are to be fruit inspectors. *Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.* In 2 Peter, Simon Peter reveals and deals with their fruit. 2 Peter 2:1: *But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.* This verse is talking about deception being practiced. This is up to date. . . . *even as there shall be false teachers among you . . .* They are varied. Anything that you believe other than the Word of God, the devil will give it to you. False teachers are everywhere. There are men who claim to have had special visions and special dreams. I do not trust your visions; I do not trust your dreams; and I do not trust your revelations. I trust the Word of God. I do not trust anything else. I do not trust your feelings. I do not trust your insight. The only way in the world you can tell truth from error is the Word of God. You have a dream; I have a dream. How do you know it is real? You have a vision; I have a vision. How can you test the reality of it? You have an opinion; I have an opinion. Your opinion, my opinion, my vision, your vision, your dreams, and my dreams are not trustworthy. They are not dependable. You have to have something to put your feet on that will not be moved. That is dependable and that is the Word of God, the Bible. Peter said there are many false prophets among you and major doctrines and cults and leaders using position. Oftentimes, denominational leaders use positions of power to promote the matter of God-less, anti-Christian beliefs and entice the young by music or false doctrine. It hits everywhere. Read the Saturday morning newspaper. Look at the headlines. Listen to the radio and the television. If you are saved the Spirit of God dwells in your heart, and you know the Spirit of God will take the Word of God to say, "That is not right. That is wrong. That is not right. That is wrong."

These false prophets are dangerous. He said they come from within. . . . *even as there shall be false teachers among you . . .* That is where they are dangerous. They are not outsiders. They are on the inside. 1 John 2:18-19: *Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.* We had better check every Sunday school teacher, every preacher, every deacon, every musician, the seminaries, the colleges, the pastors, the evangelists, and the missionaries. We are not to take anything for granted. I have never asked you to believe something because I said it. Test my ministry with the Word. There is nobody that you can believe and say, "Well, all right, because he said

it.” No sir, you are trusting the wrong thing. You are suppose to be like the people in Acts 17:11: *These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.* You check a speaker by the Scriptures and not the Scriptures by the speaker. They are dangerous. Peter said they come from within you. Many a college and seminary today are filled with infidelity. God’s people support radio broadcasts that they have no business supporting. God’s people support television broadcasts that they have no business supporting. God’s people oftentimes support missionaries that they have no business supporting. Why? You need to check them out. They are not only dangerous and varied, but they are also dishonest. The Scripture said: . . . *who privily shall bring in damnable heresies* . . . That word *privily* means *to bring in side by side*. It means to introduce these things that are dishonest. You knock on a door and tell who you are. You go soul winning. Who are you? “I am from Calvary Baptist Church.” I am not ashamed of that. I want you to know who I am and where I come from. They come in sideways. You are not afraid to make anything that is truth public. False teachers are dishonest. They come in, and side by side with the Word of God, they introduce new doctrine. They introduce new revelation. They introduce many things. Let me make a statement tonight. You cannot be a Roman Catholic if this is all you have. You read the many, many, many, many, many things that have been added to the Word of God and made equal with the Word of God. It is called tradition, and when the pope speaks officially, what he says is gospel. That is what they say. That is not so. How do I know it is not so? God’s Word says it is not so. A Christian whose faith in God is in the Word of God does not need anybody else’s books. Baptist, if you believe in the Word of God, you do not need anybody’s books. You do not need anybody’s revelation. False doctrine and cults always have to have something in addition to the Word of God. I do not need anything that anybody has ever written to add to the Word, to what I believe, and to what the Bible teaches. Peter said they come in privily. They lay along side by side. By the way, did you know that no apostate teacher is one hundred percent lies? Why? Nobody would believe them. There is enough truth in there to deceive people who do not search the Word of God. They put error and introduce error into the matter of truth and deceive people because they are not alert to the Word of God. They are dishonest. They privily shall bring in damnable or destructive heresies. This word *heresy* means *choice of opinion contrary to that which is usually received*. A person can be genuinely a teacher, a true man of God, and be wrong in his teachings. For instance, turn to Acts 18. This is a man who taught wrong doctrine. Was he a false teacher? No sir. He was not a false teacher. When I began the ministry, I preached some things that when I studied the Word of God, I discovered they were not right, and I publicly said they were not right. Acts 18:24-27: *And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace:* Now what happened? He was wrong in his teaching, but he was not a false teacher. A false teacher is one who knows the truth but deliberately rejects and lies about it for personal gain. That is a false teacher. I know one of my classmates. He preached on Hebrews 1:1: *God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets*, That word *sundry* means *at various times*. He preached, “God who at sundry times.” He said it was dry, and there was no rain anywhere. The cattle were dying everywhere, and the ground was cracked open. It was sundry. He was not a false teacher, but he sure was not preaching what the Bible said. I heard another dear brother; he was preaching on Jezebel. He was preaching that Jezebel in Revelation 2 and Jezebel in 1 Kings 16, 17 and 18 are one and the same person. I guarantee, she lived to a ripe old age. That does not make a person a false prophet or a false teacher because sometimes they err about what the Bible said. If a man or woman deliberately twists the Word of God and knows what he is doing, he is a false teacher and a deceiver. These folks that Peter was talking about were not folks who have been misinformed. They have been informed but rejected the truth, and they are false teachers. Their destiny is hell. The destructive heresies are damnable.

NUMBER TWO, CONSIDER THE DENIALS THAT ARE PROMINENT. 2 Peter 2:1: *But there were*

false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them . . . Now, what denials are prominent? They are not only deceivers, but their message is false. They are silent on positive affirmations. Look in 1 John 4:1. Did you know you can tell a man oftentimes by what he leaves out of his sermons and never touches on. 1 John 4:1-3: *Beloved, believe not every spirit . . .* (You are not to believe every Tom, Dick, and Harry that comes along, but try the Spirit. How do you try the Spirit? We are not talking about something that is following you around and you cannot see. Listen, all false doctrine is satanic.) . . . *but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come . . .* Now Jesus Christ coming in the flesh is the incarnation. Anybody who does not believe that Jesus Christ is God in the flesh is anti-Christ. What do you say about Jesus Christ? Your destiny hangs on that. He is the eternal God. He is the second Person of the Godhead. He is the Creator of the universe. He is to be worshiped. He is God. They deny the Lord that bought them. What do you say about Jesus Christ? You tell me. What you tell about Jesus Christ tells a whole lot about you. They do not confess that. They are silent on that. A false prophet does not confess a whole lot of things. He has a whole lot of denials. His ministry is made up of telling what he does not believe and undermining that which God's people believe. Let us analyze this. He is silent on that. He is vocal on denial. He will deny the Lord. He will deny the virgin birth. You cannot be saved and deny the virgin birth. You may not understand it. You may not know it when you get saved, but no saved person will ever deny the virgin birth. A Christian, when he understands the Word of God, will not deny it. False prophets deny the virgin birth. False prophets deny the sinless life of Jesus Christ. False prophets will deny His substitutionary death. False prophets will deny His bodily resurrection. False prophets will deny the second coming of Christ. False prophets will deny the inspiration and inerrancy of the Word of God. False prophets will call Him, "The Galilean." They will call Him Jesus of Nazareth. They will call Him, "The Master." They will not worship Him and call Him God. Everyone that does not is an apostate. A young man graduated from a seminary, named Noel Wesley Holyfield Jr. He received a Master of Divinity degree from a Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville in 1976. His thesis was titled, "A Sociological Analysis of the Degrees of Christian Orthodoxy." His thesis was read and approved by the committee consisting of G. Willis Bennett, chairman; G.E. Henson; E. Glen Henson; and Henry Barnett. The acceptance of the thesis indicated that the committee was satisfied that the contents were accurate and the conclusion was validated. Now, this is what he discovered. He talked about the former students, a mast of divinity students, and graduate students. I will only just give you the statistics for the graduate students. Only sixty-three percent believed in God. Only sixty-three percent believed in the divinity of Christ, and that does not mean His deity. Only thirty-seven percent believed in Biblical miracles. Only fifty-three percent believed in life after death. Only thirty-two percent believed in the virgin birth. Only thirty-seven percent believed in the existence of the devil. Only twenty-two percent believed that Jesus walked on water. The overall average was 43.9 percent. This is a Southern Baptist college where men and women are preparing to enter the ministry, and half of them do not answer right. Forty-three percent of those answers were wrong about Christ and so forth. What are they? They are unsaved men and women. How do you know? When you read 2 Peter 2, Peter calls them dogs and calls them hogs. God never calls His people dogs and hogs. He calls them sheep. We are not talking about somebody who has gotten off; we are talking about deliberate deceivers. We are now talking about the matter of satan and his denials of prominence. They have no Divine call. A man does not enter the ministry by choice. God said in Jeremiah 23:21: *I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied.* The book of Jude says that they have no Divine call, and since they have no Divine call, they have no message from God. They have a self chosen in the flesh doctrine and a self-indulgence of the intellect. They talk about what they think, and they are departed from Spirit-given words of God.

Let me read this to you. This struck my mind. You would really have a good time if I went out to the brewery somewhere and had a dedication for the brewery. Well, this appeared in a 5/9/70 of the Winston Salem's

Journal with the headline “Split Brewery Dedicated.” The Joseph Split Brewery Company dedicated a new \$60,000,000 plant here yesterday with good weather, free beer, and short speeches. Approximately a thousand guests apparently enjoyed all three at the largest breweries ever built anywhere and the largest plant under one roof in the state. Randall Rawlings is the President of the Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wichita Falls. This is the prayer that Dr. Rawlings prayed at the dedication and the christening of the world’s largest brewery: “Dear Lord, We thank Thee today that Thou hast made us so that we can enjoy new beginnings and that Thou hast made us so we can participate in this dedication and make commitments and enjoy new, fresh relationships. Our hearts tell us that in these dear people. So we thank Thee, oh living God, for the persons who have been sponged into the life and fabric, the process of living, and deciding, and being in our community. We thank Thee for them and their families. We thank Thee, oh God, for the influences that shall be engendered and the relationships that shall be enjoyed because of new friends from this plant and this industry moving into our community. Grant to all of them the resources and wisdom and skill that shall be demanded of that industry and give them, oh God, Thy presence and Thy peace. Give us all the fruits and joys of this day of dedication, and relationships, and commitments. In the name of our Lord, we pray. Amen.” Can you imagine the apostles praying at a brewery? Hey, come talk to me. Do not sit there in silence! You are telling the visitors that they may be a drunk! Can you imagine the apostles offering a dedicatory prayer at a brewery? Man, the influence of this story shows: *Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.* Can you imagine that? Oh listen, that is lolly dolly. That is popular and everything, but that is not Bible. That is treachery. Let us go a little further. Dr. W.A. Criswell has a book that was published by Broadman Press in 1970. The tone and attitude of the liberal teacher destroys the young minister’s commitment to deliver an authoritative Biblical message. He loses that divine unction from Heaven. For example, a professor in one of our Baptist schools told his class that they should never preach from Esther or from the Song of Solomon or from Ecclesiastes because these books should never have been included in the cannon. After ridiculing the Song of Solomon, as though it were an ancient immorality skit, he emphasizes his point by saying, “If I were making up the Bible and had a choice of including in it *Playboy* magazine or Song of Solomon, I would choose *Playboy* magazine.” Let us go a little further. Alas, the Scriptures are fine in their place, but that place is not on the throne. That place goes to Jesus. A noted Bible translator said, “Now, that sounds so wonderful. This is not the Word of God. Jesus is the Word of God. You do not know that Jesus Christ is the Savior, the Son of God, apart from the Word of God. He is the living Word of God. This is the written Word of God. If you are to know the living Word of God, you have to know Him through the written Word of God. They are inseparable.” The guy sounds like he is bragging on Jesus. No sir, he is undermining Jesus. *In the beginning was the Word, (That is Jesus Christ.) and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us . . .* How do you know He dwelt among us? How do you know He was made flesh? How do you know He was God? Because the Word of God says so. “Man, I am exalting Jesus.” No, he is deceiving people by his words, great swelling words that he thinks he knows better. Let us go a little further with this. Robert Bratcher, one of the main translators of *Good News for Modern Man*, spoke on the authority of the Bible during a three-day national seminar of the Southern Baptist Christian Life’s Commission on the use and abuse of power. A former Southern Baptist foreign missionary and pastor criticized the belief in Biblical inerrancy. “Only willful ignorance or intellectual dishonesty can account for the claim that the Bible is inerrant and infallible. To qualify this absurd claim by adding with respect to the original manuscript is a bit of sophistry, a fallacious attempt to justify a pattern error. No truth-loving, God-respecting, Christ-honoring believer should be guilty of such heresy. The Bible says: *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.* To invest the Bible for qualities of inerrancy and infallibility is to idolize it and to transform it into a false god. No one seriously claims that all the words of the Bible are the very words of God. If someone does so, it is only because that person is not willing to thoroughly explore its implications.” The Bible is the Word of God, every word. The words came from God. We are talking about the original. We are talking about the autographed. Listen, he warned modern day Christians not to come to the Bible in order to find in it the ready-made answers to our questions and prompt solutions to our problems; instead we are suppose to hear not only what the Spirit said to the seven churches in Asia Minor in the first

century but also what the Spirit says today in the churches in Philadelphia - Tennessee, Smyrna - North Carolina, Ephesus - Georgia, Sardis - Kentucky, and Thyatira - Mississippi. What he is saying is the Word of God was sufficient for that day, but it is not relevant for today. He is not true. The Bible is the most up-to-date book. It will always be fresh, and it will always be updated. It will always be more up-to-date than today's newspaper. "Oh," you say, "you are just saying that because you believe it." No, I have read it a few times. It is relevant. It works.

The pastor of the First Baptist Church in Lakeland, Florida, wrote the "Sermon of the Week." I am not talking about some place far away; I am talking about in Lakeland. The following is what he wrote: "The New Testament portion of the Bible completed my answer to the question, 'What does God mean to me?' Jesus was the human illustration of God. He said, 'The Father and I are one.' Somehow that statement has never meant to me an error in Biblical doctrine. What or who was the real Jesus Christ? What particular part of Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God? Certainly not His body, His beard (if He had a beard), His eyes, or His vocal chords. When Jesus said, 'I and the Father are one,' He must have meant that God was the love, the agape, that He embodied. He meant that God was fully present in the kind of life he lived and perfectly expressed in His teaching that the body, the appearance, the voice, and the gestures were a temporary phenomenon lasting about thirty-three years. It was just temporary. The agape love, the life of good will, should abide forever and have an existence quite independent of the body and physical appearance of Jesus." The pastor also said, "God is love, and wherever you find love, there is God." That is not what God's Word says. I will read a little further. "Jesus, then, is the name of a human body that is long since disappeared." Is that so? They touched him. He walked with them. He sat right beside them. He ate with them. He went away physically. They saw him go away. . . . *this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.* He went away in a body, and he is coming back in a body, a body which the life is in the spirit and not in the blood, a glorified body. He is coming back in a body. There are people who stand in the pulpit and deny the Lord Jesus Christ. "He is not God. That body was temporary." They finish it there. "Jesus then is the name of a human body that has long since disappeared, and Christ is the name of the Divine love that God sends into human lives. This Divine love does not have to be called by the two English words Jesus Christ. You can call it anything you want to. Undoubtedly, many people have experienced the Divine love who do not know these two words. They have experienced it, and they do not know Jesus Christ. God is love as the New Testament says, and this reality, this ultimate reality no matter what words we use, may be Buddha; it may be Confucius; it may be whatever you use. This ultimate reality, no matter what the words we use, is what Jesus meant when He said, 'The Father and I are one, no one comes to the Father but by me.'" Now, what is that? That is a false, unsaved teacher. How do we know he is unsaved? I did not say he was unsaved. The Bible says he is unsaved. There are a lot of false teachers. There are a lot of Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, and Fundamental Christian denominations who used to stand for the faith.

NUMBER THREE, CONSIDER THE DEFILEMENT PRODUCED. 2 Peter 2:2: *And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.* Doctrine produces light. False doctrine brings about false living. Back to their denial is this matter of defilement. False doctrine produces false living. He said *their pernicious ways*. The word *pernicious* means *unbridled lust*. Anything goes. In that chapter, he said that while they promised him liberty, they tell people, "You are no longer under law. You have freedom, total freedom, unbridled lust. Take off the bridle and engage in anything that you want to." False doctrine produces false living. Turn to Jeremiah 23:9: *Mine heart within me is broken because of the prophets; all my bones shake; I am like a drunken man, and like a man whom wine hath overcome, because of the Lord, and because of the words of his holiness.* Look at verse 14: *I have seen also in the prophets of Jerusalem an horrible thing: they commit adultery, and walk in lies: they strengthen also the hands of evildoers, that none doth return from his wickedness: they are all of them unto me as Sodom and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah.* Look down in verse 17: *They say still unto them that despise me, the Lord hath said, Ye shall have peace;* In other words, you can live anyway you want to, and the Lord will bless you. Christian, you had better let your mind think about the radio broadcast, the Christian periodicals, and the television broadcasts. You had better examine all of them by the Word of God. We have had enough up to

date business in the last two years that would curl the hair on your head. How do you test it out? Test it out with the Word. Jeremiah 23:17: *They say still unto them that despise me, The LORD hath said, Ye shall have peace; and they say unto every one that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come upon you.* “That is all right. God will not judge you. God loves you.” I want to tell you tonight that God is a holy Judge. He will judge sin. Look at verse 32: *Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the Lord, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies,* A true prophet, a true teacher, will not make people live loosely. It makes them live godly and reverently in this present world. Anybody who preaches and allows you to live loosely did not get that from the Word of God. Titus 2:11: *Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;* Let me finish Jeremiah 23:32: *Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the Lord, and do tell the, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, no commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the Lord.* Jude 4: *For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.* False doctrine produces defilement. It is very popular. 2 Peter 2:2: *And many shall follow their pernicious ways;* False religion is very popular. It is a religion of the masses. If I was immoral and a pervert, would you back me? Oh, you would say, “God would forgive you.” Would you back me? There are millions of folks that would arise and say, “Yes sir, we won’t. We won’t. We won’t. We won’t. We won’t.” That tells on them. *And many shall follow their pernicious (or lascivious) ways . . .* It is a religion of the masses. It is the broad way. Matthew 7:13-14: *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.* What are they? They are quote, “Prophets,” and they are popular. There are popularity polls, and people follow their ways. A lot of people follow their ways. Did you know you sit under the kind of ministry that you believe and like? Is that right? There are a lot of people who go to ear-tickling ministries. Is that right? 2 Timothy 4:3-4 talks about the last days: *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; (It does not mean that the teacher has itching ears but that the people have itching ears.) And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.* The masses tell us a lie. They tell us that which is easy. It does not say they followed them in their doctrine, but it says they followed them in their way. They could care less about doctrine. They want somebody to approve of the way that they are living. Their problem is not theological; their problem is that they are followers. It is a moral problem. The first crowd’s problem is theological, and the second crowd’s problem is moral. The second crowd of followers’ first problem is morality. They could care less about theology. Why? They want somebody to make them comfortable in their sin. Not only that, look at the last part of 2 Peter 2:2: . . . *by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.* That means what? That means that God’s Son is blasphemed by the many that follow this crowd and by how they live. The name of God’s Son has been blasphemed in the United States in these last months. That is not Christianity. I want you to know that everybody in the pulpit is not a homosexual or an adulterer. I want you to know there are godly deacons and godly preachers and godly evangelists and godly missionaries that will not dip the flag and not pull in their colors. Everybody is NOT doing it! What do they try to do? They try to make us look like “fuddy duddies.” “Oh, you are so narrow minded.” I said a few weeks ago that you can question the salvation of these folks according to this passage of Scripture. “Oh,” you say, “you are judging.” No, I am not judging. I am just being a fruit inspector. If a person who is saved falls into sin and repents, what is the evidence of repentance? You will not get your feelings hurt by what you lose. You say, “That is what I deserve.” I do not see any repentance on the national scene. I see grasping for power and position, and I do not see any sense of unworthiness. God will forgive you, but there are some things that you forfeit in leadership when you fall into sin. Repentance will make you say, “All right, I asked for it.”

NUMBER FOUR, CONSIDER THEIR MOTIVE. 2 Peter 2:3: *And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you . . .* Notice their pursuit. It is personal gain. It may be money. It may be popularity. It may be position. They pursue that, and they will sacrifice God’s Word. I am not talking

about Christian enterprise, pastoral remuneration, and Balaam rides again today. Balaam said, “How much will you give me?” Today, music is a big business. I am going to say it. I think there are a lot of youth directors and music directors that use music that destroys. Why? What are they doing? They want the crowds. If you love truth, you do not give that which destroys. Now what does it say? He said: . . . *through covetousness* . . . That is the heart and motive of their entire life. I would suggest that you get a doctrinal statement from those television broadcasting ministries that you support. You find out what they believe! You test them doctrinally! You find out where their money goes! These men are moved by money. God’s men are moved by the Holy Ghost. I will tell you that there is a vast difference between being moved by the Holy Spirit and being moved by money. A man of God – preacher, teacher, or missionary – will preach if you do not pay him. You cannot shut his mouth by cutting off the money, and you cannot shut his mouth by buying his mouth.

Notice their tools. 2 Peter 2:3: *And through covetousness shall they with feigned words* . . . The word *feigned* is where we get our word *plastic*. You can take plastic and make a mold of almost anything out of it into the shape that you want it. He is saying here that they take words and mold them at will to suit their vain imaginations. They make up stories. They know how to sway a crowd. They know how to dig up and how to move people. That is plastic words. 2 Peter 2:18: *For when they speak great swelling words of vanity* . . . They adjust their words to fit the audience. If they are in a level crowd, they deny the faith. If they are in an orthodox crowd, they talk about the fundamentals of the faith. These are words to fascinate their victim and tickle their ears. They use words to move and to cause people to give. I heard of a preacher one time. He said, “I am not going to preach until you give so much in the offering plate.” He would still be waiting to preach if I had been sitting there. I would walk out on him. If he said that, I do not want to hear him preach. If he already had that in the offering plate, I still do not want to hear that. He has already told what he is after. The offering plate does not govern whether you preach or whether you do not preach. It does not govern what you preach or you do not preach. That is feigned words. Now, here is an interesting thing. I never saw it until just about an hour and a half ago. I have read this many times. We are talking about many following their pernicious ways. The unsaved world follows these false teachers, but watch now. He uses feign words and makes merchandise out of who? Look at verse 3: *And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of* . . . who? You, God’s people. *Make merchandise* means *in order to go to the trading, the traffic, a place where trade is carried on*. I got a letter the other day. That letter came and it had a prayer where you are supposed to get down and pray on this cloth. On this cloth is a figure of Jesus (supposed to be Jesus) with His eyes closed. As you are praying, you look at it and His are open. It is drawn in such a way that if you look carefully his eyes are already open. Supposedly, when Jesus opens His eyes you are to tell Him what you want, and when you get through, you write all that on a piece of paper, fold it up, put twenty-five dollars or something in there, and mail it back to the person. Any idiot could read that, but there are a lot of folks who are not idiots. This mail and all this stuff is a lot of hog wash. What are they doing? They are making merchandise of God’s people, and child of God, you do not need any prayer cloth. You do not need any holy handkerchiefs. You do not need any kneeling place. You do not need any holy sweat. The man said, “You send me so much money, and I will send you a swatch out of my coat that I preached in. It has got holy sweat in it.” My sweat is as holy as his sweat. People pay to smell B.O. They are suckers. Who do they make merchandise out of? They did not say they were making merchandise of the many that are living it up, but he makes merchandise of God’s people. Peter said, “That is the reason I am writing to you.” I went to Haynes City in 1950 and had a tent meeting for Southside Baptist Church in Winterhaven, Florida. I was a member of that church before I went off to school. The church had bought us a tent and seats for services for preacher boys to preach in. Brother Malcom came to Tennessee Temple and said, “If you will come home in the summertime, we will take care of you. You can take the tent and just preach all summer long.” I went to Haynes City, Florida. I did not know anybody. I put that tent down in Haynes City, Florida. I preached for four and a half weeks. I never passed an offering plate. I never mentioned money, and in the middle of that meeting, those people stood up and said, “Preacher, we would like to take an offering.” I said, “If you want to take an offering, that is your business, but I am taken care of.” They took an offering. If God has called you, money will not shut or open your mouth. Now, what do they do? They make merchandise of God’s people

and contribute to what they should not contribute to. Let me just quit with this phrase. Look at the last part of verse 3: . . . *whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.* Verse 1: . . . *bring upon themselves swift destruction.* He said that God's judgement is not asleep. It is not slumbering. It is swift, and it does not linger. They are under the judgement of God, and one of these days, God will execute it. They are not getting by.