

² But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves. ³ Many will follow their depraved conduct and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. ⁴ In their greed these teachers will exploit you with fabricated stories. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping.

⁵ For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them in chains of darkness to be held for judgment; ⁶ if he did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others; ⁷ if he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by burning them to ashes, and made them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; ⁸ and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by the depraved conduct of the lawless ⁹ (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard)— ¹⁰ if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials and to hold the unrighteous for punishment on the day of judgment. ¹¹ This is especially true of those who follow the corrupt desire of the flesh and despise authority.

Bold and arrogant, they are not afraid to heap abuse on celestial beings; ¹² yet even angels, although they are stronger and more powerful, do not heap abuse on such beings when bringing judgment on them from the Lord. ¹³ But these people blaspheme in matters they do not understand. They are like unreasoning animals, creatures of instinct, born only to be caught and destroyed, and like animals they too will perish.

¹⁴ They will be paid back with harm for the harm they have done. Their idea of pleasure is to carouse in broad daylight. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their pleasures while they feast with you.

Review the context.

- What has given Peter such great concern for the Church?
- What makes “false teaching” so unhealthy for the Church?

Understand it.

- Peter claims that false teachers have always been present in the Church. Can you think of examples in the early church where this was the case?
- Why does God take blasphemy so seriously? What are some of the examples that prove God’s decisiveness on blasphemy? (see v.4-9)
- In verses 3 and 10, what are some motivations for causing such pain among believers? How might believers find strength in recognizing these motivations?
- According to v.11, what might be one of the “false teachings” about celestial beings? Why should believers avoid practicing judgment upon these beings...even if they are “fallen”?
- How is it possible to “blaspheme in matters they do not understand”? Does this kind of blasphemy happen today? If so, how?
- How would you describe Peter’s “tone” in this section? Why is it important for leaders to take false teaching (i.e. blasphemy, deception, enticing others into depravity) so seriously?

Apply it.

- Jesus’ Church is meant to reveal God’s splendor and beauty through our knowledge, obedience, and pursuit of godliness. How do you engage the issues of false teachings around you without getting distracted from your (and the Church’s) purpose?