

“Damnable Heresies”

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The New Testament is replete with warnings about false teachers. One such warning is found in 2 Peter 2:1 which says, “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.” There are several lessons that can be gleaned from this passage, consider these three.

First, it should come as no surprise that false teachers would be among us. There were false prophets that lead Israel astray. In fact, there have always been those who are more interested in propagating their views than in advancing God’s word. These, Peter says, bring in their heresies. This they do “privily” (that is secretly or covertly). Until their ideas are established, they work covertly behind the scene spreading their venom.

Second, false teachers bring “damnable heresies.” “Damnable” means destruction or perdition. Unlike the sound doctrine that “holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:21), these false teachers promote doctrines that lead to destruction. The word “heresies” literally means choice and came to mean opinion, particularly a self-willed or erroneous opinion. These are opinions marked by destruction. This implies that there are different kinds of false opinions. There is a grave difference between a false teacher and one who has a “slip of the tongue” or a mistaken conclusion from study. The false teacher teaches “damnable heresies.” He makes “shipwreck” of the faith of some (1 Timothy 1:19). “Their word will eat as doth a canker” (2 Timothy 2:17). They “subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake” (Titus 1:11). Furthermore, some may hold opinions that may be false but does not lead to perdition. Whether you believe that the eunuch of Acts 8 was an Ethiopian or a transplanted Jew living in Ethiopia makes little difference. One’s salvation does not depend upon such things unless one rebelliously denies God’s holy word. However, such matters as “denying the Lord,” “grace only,” and/or “faith only” salvation does lead others to destruction and is, thus, damnable heresy.

Third, false teachers “bring upon themselves swift destruction.” Notice, it is brought upon themselves. God is the judge, but the judgment will be “according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Corinthians 5:10). “Swift” in this passage does not mean that their destruction will be soon, but that it will come upon them swiftly without any hesitation or restraint. Sadly, even in view of such destruction, “many shall follow their pernicious [lascivious - CN] ways” (2 Peter 2:2). Because false teachers are leading many down the “primrose path” towards destruction, their “mouths must be stopped” (Titus 1:11).

Brethren, let us be keenly aware of the destructiveness of false teachers. Rather than passively allowing them to work, let us stand diametrically opposed to them. Rather than having fellowship with them by our support, let us not be partakers of their evil deeds. Let us be as our Lord, pointing out their evil deeds that others may not fall prey unto their diabolical traps.

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