

Peter continues to describe presumptuous men among the Christian profession. We are not to be surprised. We meet them everywhere and in every age, sometimes in the mirror.

We learn by studying the Lord Jesus' words, and the words of the apostle like Peter and Paul, what the limits are surrounding appropriate speech for a believer. We are mere fallen men descended from Adam. He lost the dominant position given him by God when he submitted to Satan in the garden. But we are now Christian men and women brought into the dignity of a new race headed by the Second Man, Jesus Christ. (For instance, in 1Corinthians 11 we learned one way to quietly acknowledge that restored dignity through our hair length and head coverings.) As we have seen, abusive language or actions are never appropriate even against the most vile and malicious creatures. Peter's language here is among the strongest in scripture. He exposes and rebukes the wicked persons who presume to rise up among God's people and usurp places of dignity and authority not theirs. They choose to live only to fulfill the selfish lusts of their wicked hearts. They strongly and vocally champion their evil ways as normal and desirable. They defend the most gross evil acts as customary. **But Peter calls it as he sees it, yes, as God sees it.** Today the news media of the world give adequate witness to the corrupt reasoning and vile acts of some claiming to be Christian. Peter's prophetic prediction was true.

Men in Christian circles are spoken of "as natural brute beasts made to be taken and destroyed." They have spiritually regressed to a lower life form, that of an animal. Popular evolution philosophy today holds that man is merely a sophisticated beast evolved naturally from "lower forms." All humans are said to be the mere products of evolution and "natural selection." Judging from the beast-like attitudes and behavior some degraded people exhibit men may be somewhat justified in reaching that conclusion. The thinking of the Animal Rights folks is consistent with the erroneous philosophy of evolution. On the other hand Humane Societies by their very name presume human dignity and authority higher than the animals they are dedicated to protect and treat "humanely." Humans, certainly Christians, shouldn't be inhumane to one another or beasts. But God says mankind has departed from the original created position at the head of Creation above all mere animals. Step by step some have descended ("devolved") into beast-like creatures and worse, beings without feeling lower than the beasts. Paul, in Romans chapter 1, deftly outlines this historical regression from unthankful beings to those with a reprobate (debased, depraved, worthless) mind. Summing up Paul says,

*Romans 1:32 Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not*

*only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.*

Sadly this history has repeated itself generation to generation, civilization upon civilization, and still men don't learn.

Peter points up several things that distinguish these degenerates from real Christians. Some statements describe what they do. Others (here marked with a \*) what they are. He also declares their doom. They are allowed to live whatever life span God gives them in which to repent. But those who will not are doomed.

- They speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption; and shall receive the reward of unrighteousness,
- They count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Most evil activities occur in the dark. Men love darkness rather than light, John 3:19; Romans 13:13; 1Corinthians 11:20-21; Philippians 3:19; Jude 1:12. But these flaunt their evil ways out in the open without shame. For example, note the Rainbow Sash's in the news these days.
- \*They are "spots" and "blemishes," Christ offered Himself without spot or blemish, 1Peter 1:19. His Bride, the Assembly, will be without spot or blemish as well, Ephesians 5:27.
- They sport themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with believers. These are unashamed to publically behave unrighteously while remaining among God's people and even seek leadership positions there. Peter exposes these so the believers will cease to allow this free association. They have eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; Matthew 5:28-29. Spiritual adultery involves dividing one's heart between another god and the God that gave His one and only Son. We are to call upon Him with an undivided heart, 2Timothy 2:22.
- They beguile unstable (vacillating) souls, James 1:5-8; 4:8.
- They have exercised a heart with covetous practices; indulging themselves in whatever attracts their heart desire,
- \*They are cursed children, still in their sins.  
*Galatians 3:10 Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.*  
*3:13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us:*
- They have forsaken the right way and are gone astray,  
*Isaiah 53:6 Isa 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.*
- They follow the way of Balaam, the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; But was

rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet. This is one of several extraordinary incidents Peter cites from scripture. He has no doubts or hesitation to believe that they really happened to real people, in real places, on real occasions. Balaam's deep down problem was pride. He wasn't accustomed to being overridden by anyone, even God. If he couldn't succeed in cursing Israel he would defeat them through immorality, not because he hated them but because he was hired to bring about their downfall.

- \*These are wells without water, preachers without spiritual refreshment though advertising to be a source.
- \*These are clouds that are carried with a tempest; preachers or sects with a promise of relief for spiritual drought but having nothing to give but chilling, buffeting wind.
- To whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever, doom in eternal gloom, not only absence of light but an impenetrable unrelieved depression of soul.

What is Peter's purpose in writing these strong condemnations of false prophets and skeptics (ch.3) in Christendom and the secular world?

First we are alerted to what is to come so we will not be taken in by:

- the false prophets  
who, among other things, advocate tolerance at the expense of faithfulness;
- secular theories,  
such as evolution.

Second, he reassures us God is in control and hasn't changed.

Third, he affirms that these will be righteously judged in God's own time. Therefore we should not attempt to take judgement into our own hands and seek to punish or hurt these false prophets or attempt to have them punished by the civil authorities. God will deal with them in due time. On the other hand, if they commit crimes they should be reported to the authorities.

Fourth, by exposing these false prophets Peter clearly intends that true believers should not continue to fellowship in any way with such imposters. They are intent upon destruction of the faith, for whatever reason. If God has reserved them for judgement, we are to also. We must take every opportunity to witness to them of their sin and their need for the Savior in view of the judgement to come. But we should not find ourselves linked with them in any way. We join the Lord in reserving them for judgement and coming out from among them and not touching the unclean thing, 2Corinthians 6:14-7:1.

By Ron Canner, June 1, 2005

#### ***"Natural brute beasts"***

From Romans 5:12 some believers hold that death came upon all animals because of the fall of Adam. They reason that there could have been no "gap" between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2 in which large populations of creatures could have lived and thrived and died before Adam. They say the fossil and bone remains cannot reflect earlier ages in the earth before the creation of Adam, because there was no death until Adam sinned. They could be right!

On the other hand 2Peter 2:12 seems to indicate death of a "brute beast" is not counted the same as death of a human being. Other scriptures seem to support this thought. The profusion of animal sacrifices required by God, beginning with those necessary to clothe Adam and Eve, indicates the death of an animal, while significant, is less important than that of a human. In contrast, even today God totally obliterates nations that practice human sacrifice. Use of Romans 5:12 to infer that animals couldn't have lived and died leaving fossil remains in ages prior to Genesis 1:2 may not be justified.

Someday we will know.