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## FALSE FOLLIES

There's a deadly predator roaming here in northwest Iowa. Over the past several months, hunters near Sioux Rapids recorded trailcam images of a mountain lion. It's described as "a deer-killing machine" due to the carnage it leaves. Are YOU much like a deer being stalked by a dangerous predator? That's the picture from 2 Peter 2:10-16, with its fleshly descriptions of deceptive follies of false teachers.

**1- Defiling passions** - Peter uses powerful word-picture language as he warns against false teachers: *"especially those who indulge in the lust of defiling passion and despise authority. Bold and wilful, they do not tremble as they blaspheme the glorious ones, whereas angels, though greater in might and power, do not pronounce a blasphemous judgment against them before the Lord. But these, like irrational animals, creatures of instinct, born to be caught and destroyed, blaspheming about matters of which they are ignorant, will also be destroyed in their destruction."* Peter ratchets his rhetoric as he warns how false prophets and teachers aim to bring their heresies right into the church. This contrasts to true teaching, as in chapter 1 he emphasizes believers as partakers of the divine nature who are to add godly qualities to their lives. Instead, false teachers follow sensuality and emphasize the human fleshly nature, like the examples of the corruption around Noah and Lot that we studied last time, and see in our world today.

**2- Despising authority** - False teachers indulge in sensual passions because they despise the authority of God. The Sovereign One supernaturally inspired His written-down Word, the Bible, which in chapter 1 Peter strongly reminds is the divine yardstick of God's authority. But culture mocks God and the Bible, as do false teachers. They claim to know better than ordinary believers, due to some special extra-Biblical knowledge received directly from God, apart from the Bible. This attitude extends the spiritual realm of angels and demons, as they *"blaspheme the glorious ones."* To blaspheme is to speak irreverently or inappropriately about holy things. Believers are not to presume upon nor mock spiritual entities. Satan and his demons are defeated foes, but we are not to be flippant nor arrogant about them. Neil Anderson explains, "Our relationship to demonic powers in the spiritual realm is a lot like germs in the physical realm. If you live a balanced life your immune system will protect you. In Jesus Christ the Truth, you are equipped with all the authority and protection you need to deal with anything they throw at you."

**3- Irrational animals** - False teachers fail to discern false spirits, as they ignore or misuse the Bible, and therefore fall for doctrines of demons. Verse 12 says false teachers and those who fall prey to them are like *"brute beasts, irrational animals, creatures of instinct, who blaspheme in their ignorance."* They irreverently assume they are superior to false teaching, and succumb. MG Johnston says, "Do not yield to the temptation to let instinct and intuition lead you in your Christian life. Do not be deceived by those who deliver spine-tingling messages that purport to come directly from God." Rather, know and obey the Bible.

**4- Blots of sensuality** - Peter says false teachers will *"suffer wrong as the wage for their wrongdoing"* as they *"count it pleasure to revel in the daytime"* as *"blots and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, while they feast with you."* The Greek word Peter uses for deceptions rhymes with love - pointing out how the heretics openly do things that others might do in the dark, as they live in a way opposite that of Jesus' teachings. Readers of Peter's letters could tell who these false teachers are by the sharp descriptions (also elsewhere in Scripture, such as 1 Corinthians 6 and 11). Therefore, WE too must be on guard for them today, as they are greedy for financial gain and sensual pleasure. As heresy is uncovered, often there is immorality and overt control. Be on guard, because even ministers and Christian workers can fall prey. Recall the northwest Iowa teacher in a Christian school recently sentenced for child porn and exploitation of children. The pedophilia problem reaches into the highest levels of society worldwide.

**5- Blemishes of deception** - Peter says false teachers "revel" in their sensuality and in their deception, as they flaunt their follies. Verse 14 says *"they have eyes full of adultery, insatiable for sin. They entice unsteady souls. They have hearts trained in greed. Accursed children! Forsaking the right way, they have gone astray"* and they will get the judgment they deserve. Peter points to an interesting example from Numbers 22-24: *"Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved gain from wrongdoing, but was rebuked for his transgression: a speechless donkey spoke with human voice and restrained the prophet's madness."* God spoke through a brute beast to stop the wickedness of false prophecy. It was irony of divine intervention, as Peter refers to false prophets as "irrational animals." Likewise today, pray that God opens YOUR eyes to the lies of the world, the flesh, and the devil. This happens as you daily trust and obey His truth, in the power of the Holy Spirit - to keep you walking in God's ways, according to His written-down Word! □