

11-22-2015

Message: Profile of a Destructive Minister, Part 1

Text: 2 Peter 2:1-10a

Introduction

- A. We live in a dangerous world. Recent terrorist attacks in Paris, Mali, along with ISIS threats to the US underscore this, requiring that we be alert, vigilant in protecting our citizens from those who would harm us.
- B. Churches are soft targets and not immune to violent attacks, as we saw this past June with the murder of 9 members of Emmanuel African Episcopal Church in Charleston, SC. As a result, we at TRB have created a Gatekeepers Team to help protect us from those who would bring physical harm to us.
- C. But there is an even greater danger to our church and other churches than any threat terrorist cells or violent individuals pose. It is the threat of false teachers who would draw us away from a true knowledge of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, and put our souls in eternal peril. Jesus said to His disciples ...

Luke 12:4 "I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that have no more that they can do.⁵ "But I will warn you whom to fear: fear the One who, after He has killed, has authority to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear Him!

- D. Notice that the now risen, reigning Christ through His apostles, including Peter, continues to warn His church to be alert and vigilant against those who would bring eternal harm to our souls. What a Good Shepherd He is!

I. 2:1a What the church can expect to emerge among her members - false teachers

2 Peter 2:1 But false prophets also arose among the people, **just as there will also be false teachers among you**, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies (hairesis), even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.

- A. It is not a question of "if," it is only a question of "when." Such was the case in OT Israel and the NT church. Since God is sovereign, in control of all things, what is His purpose in appointing such infiltration to happen to His churches?

- 1. God tests us by false and fractious brethren.

Deuteronomy 13:1 "If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder,² and the sign or the wonder comes true, concerning which he spoke to you, saying, 'Let us go after other gods (whom you have not known) and let us serve them,'³ you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for **the LORD your God is testing you to find out if you love the LORD your God with all**

your heart and with all your soul.

1 Corinthians 11:19 For there must also be factions (haireisis) among you, **so that those who are approved may become evident among you.**

2. This should not surprise us, since God tests us by other means such as persecution.

1 Peter 1:6 In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, **you have been distressed by various trials,**⁷ **so that the proof of your faith,** *being* more precious than gold which is perishable, **even though tested by fire,** may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

B. So false prophets arose among the OT people of God.

1. 2 Chronicles 18:5,10 Ahab assembled 400 prophets, including Zedekiah, who prophesied military victory, versus Micaiah, who prophesied Ahab's death.

2 Chronicles 18:5 Then the king of Israel assembled the prophets, four hundred men, and said to them, "Shall we go against Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall I refrain?" And they said, "Go up, for God will give *it* into the hand of the king." ...¹⁰ Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah made horns of iron for himself and said, "Thus says the LORD, 'With these you shall gore the Arameans until they are consumed.'" ...¹⁶ So he (Micaiah) said, "I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains, like sheep which have no shepherd; And the LORD said, 'These have no master. Let each of them return to his house in peace.'"¹⁷ Then the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "Did I not tell you that he would not prophesy good concerning me, but evil?"

2. Jer. 28 Hananiah

Jeremiah 28:10 **Then Hananiah the prophet took the yoke from the neck of Jeremiah the prophet and broke it.**¹¹ **Hananiah spoke in the presence of all the people, saying, "Thus says the LORD, 'Even so will I break within two full years the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon from the neck of all the nations.'"** Then the prophet Jeremiah went his way.¹² The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah after Hananiah the prophet had broken the yoke from off the neck of the prophet Jeremiah, saying,¹³ "Go and speak to Hananiah, saying, 'Thus says the LORD, "You have broken the yokes of wood, but you have made instead of them yokes of iron."' ¹⁴ 'For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, "I have put a yoke of iron on the neck of all these nations, that they may serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; and they will serve him. And I have also given him the beasts of the field.'"¹⁵ **Then Jeremiah the prophet said to Hananiah the prophet, "Listen now, Hananiah, the LORD has not sent you, and you have made this people trust in a lie.**¹⁶ **"Therefore thus says the LORD, 'Behold, I am about to remove you from the face of the earth. This year you are going to die, because you have counseled rebellion against the LORD.'"**¹⁷ **So Hananiah the prophet died in the same year in the seventh month.**

C. False teachers will arise among God's NT people.

1. Jesus warns

Matthew 7:15 "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.¹⁶ "You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they?"¹⁷ "So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit.

Matthew 24:11 "Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many.

2. Paul warns

Acts 20:28 "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.²⁹ **"I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock;³⁰ and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them."**³¹ "Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears.

3. John warns

1 John 2:18 Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, **even now many antichrists have appeared;** from this we know that it is the last hour.¹⁹ They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us.

II. 2:1b-3a What the church can expect from false teachers

A. 2:1b Unorthodox teaching

2 Peter 2:1 But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce **destructive heresies,** even **denying the Master** who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.

1. destructive heresies - not all incorrect theological positions can be labeled "destructive," but these can. E.g., "modalism," which denies the Trinity, saying the one person of God reveals or manifests Himself in three roles or modes of operation. (Cf. The controversy and concern surrounding Phillips, Craig, and Dean and the United Pentecostal Church which holds to a doctrine of "Oneness." John MacArthur writes in The Truth War, p. 117, "Many - perhaps most - in the evangelical movement today are perfectly willing to ignore the lessons of Scripture and history, set aside the whole disagreement as something

entirely nonessential, and embrace contemporary Sabellianism as a legitimate expression of authentic Christian faith. For at least a decade now evangelical best seller lists have included a steady stream of works by authors and musicians who deny the doctrine of the Trinity. They hold to a distinctive version of modalism. That is the official position of “Oneness Pentecostals” and the United Pentecostal Church International. As these groups and their popular spokespersons have found increasing acceptance in the evangelical mainstream, modalism is suddenly being accepted as a valid evangelical option.”

2. denying the Master who bought them.

Titus 1:16 They profess to know God, **but by their deeds they deny Him**, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed.

Luke 6:45 "Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?"

3. distortion of the concept of grace. (E.g., Tullian Tchividjian removed from the Gospel Coalition web site by D.A. Carson and Tim Keller over concern that his theology of grace was negating the necessity of good works. Tchividjian this year had an adulterous affair exposed and was forced to step down from his pastorate at Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church. He was deposed by the PCA on August 11th, filed for divorce on August 22nd, and was hired in September by another PCA church as director of ministry development).

Jude 1:4 For **certain persons have crept in unnoticed**, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons **who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness** (aselgia) and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

4. Cf. 3b - teach that "judgment is idle." Universalism is becoming increasingly popular.

2 Peter 2:3 and in *their* greed they will exploit you with false words; **their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.**

2 Peter 3:3 Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with *their* mocking, following after their own lusts,⁴ and saying, "**Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.**"

- B. 2:1b Stealth - secretly introducing heresy (through blogs, books, facebook/snap chat posts, audio/video sermons, preachers)

2 Peter 2:1 But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will **secretly** introduce destructive heresies

Jude 1:4 For **certain persons have crept in unnoticed**, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into

licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

Matthew 7:15 "Beware of the false prophets, **who come to you in sheep's clothing**, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.

2 Corinthians 11:13 For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, **disguising themselves as apostles of Christ**.¹⁴ No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.¹⁵ Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.

When churches look for speakers, a new senior pastor, or people look for churches, what do they look for? Comments in the past which people have made about pastors who were not orthodox:

1. Good speaker, has me rolling in the aisles.
2. Nice singing or speaking voice, smile
3. Very positive
4. Such a nice looking family
5. Popular
6. Has written a book

While these are all fine things, these are all things possessed by the most destructive false teachers.

C. 2:2a Sensual indulgence. Aselgia = licentiousness = a lack of moral/sexual restraint.

2 Peter 2:2 **Many will follow their sensuality (aselgia)**, and because of them **the way of the truth will be maligned**;³ and **in their greed they will exploit you** with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.

D. 2:2b Popularity ("Many") - no wonder, they tell us to indulge in our sinful passions

E. 2:2c bring a bad name to Christianity

F 2:3a greedy exploitation through false extrabiblical words or flattery. Cf. "Heavenly tourism genre." The trifecta of Heaven is Real, 90 Minutes in Heaven, and The Little Boy Who Came Back from Heaven were pulled from Lifeway Christian Bookstores' shelves in 2015 after the boy in the latter title confessed it was a fabrication, plus a 2014 SBC resolution against such genre.

III. 2:3b-6,10a What false teachers can expect from God - judgment and destruction.

2 Peter 2:3 and in their greed they will exploit you with false words; **their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep**.

A. first prophetic example: 2:4 angels (Gen 6?; Jude 6)

2 Peter 2:4 For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment;

Jude 1:6 And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day,

B. second prophetic example: 2:5 - flood

2 Peter 2:5 and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly;

C. third prophetic example: 2:6 - Sodom and Gomorrah

2 Peter 2:6 and if He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly lives thereafter;

D. The certainty of judgment

2 Peter 2:9 **then the Lord knows how** to rescue the godly from temptation, and **to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment**,¹⁰ and especially those who indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires and despise authority.

Luke 17:26 "And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man:²⁷ they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.²⁸ "It was the same as happened in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building;²⁹ but on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all.³⁰ "It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed.

IV. 2:5-9 What the faithful can expect from God - rescue from all that would destroy us.

A. 2:5 God preserved Noah

2 Peter 2:5 and did not spare the ancient world, but **preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness**, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly;

B. 2:7,8 God rescued Lot

2 Peter 2:7 and if **He rescued righteous Lot**, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men⁸ (for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day by their lawless deeds),

C. 2:9 - God rescues us from trials, temptations+ unto the preservation of the soul

2 Peter 2:9 **then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation**, and to

keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment,

1 Corinthians 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, **who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able**, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.

1 Samuel 2:9 "**He keeps the feet of His godly ones**, but the wicked ones are silenced in darkness;

1 Peter 1:5 who are **protected by the power of God through faith** for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Psalms 121:1 I will lift up my eyes to the mountains; From where shall my help come?² My help comes from the LORD, Who made heaven and earth.³ He will not allow your foot to slip; He who keeps you will not slumber.⁴ Behold, He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.⁵ The LORD is your keeper; The LORD is your shade on your right hand.⁶ The sun will not smite you by day, nor the moon by night.⁷ The LORD will protect you from all evil; He will keep your soul.⁸ The LORD will guard your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forever.

Conclusion

- A. As we approach this Thanksgiving holiday we ought to remember to give thanks to God for godly shepherds and godly parents who protect us, who look after the welfare of our souls.
- B. For all who are members age 18 and older, ponder, pray, and participate in our current elder/deacon nomination process, affirming only those who have been tested and found to meet Christ's qualifications for leadership.

1 Timothy 3:10 These men must also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach.

- C. Be on guard for those who would deceive and lead us from our own steadfastness in Christ.

2 Peter 3:17 You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness,¹⁸ but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

- D. Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, giving thanks to Him Who knows how to rescue us from temptation and to keep us from stumbling. To Him be the glory!

On the Sufficiency of the Scripture Regarding the Afterlife

WHEREAS, There have been numerous books and movies purporting to explain or describe the afterlife experience; and

WHEREAS, These books and movies have had a considerable impact as seen in the best seller lists and high box office receipts; and

WHEREAS, Many of these books and movies have sought to describe heaven from a subjective, experiential source, mainly via personal testimonies that cannot be corroborated; and

WHEREAS, Many of these are not unified and contain details that are antithetical to Scripture; and

WHEREAS, Many devout and well-meaning people allow these to become their source and basis for an understanding of the afterlife rather than scriptural truth; and

WHEREAS, Though the Scriptures include explicit accounts of persons raised from the dead, such as Jairus' daughter, the widow of Nain's son, and Lazarus, in God's perfect revelatory wisdom, He has not given us any report of their individual experience in the afterlife

[Deuteronomy 29:29](#); [Mark 5:21–43](#); [Luke 7:11–17](#); [John 11:35–44](#)); and

WHEREAS, The Apostle Paul wrote about "a man in Christ" who was caught up "into the third heaven" who "heard inexpressible words" that "a man is not allowed to speak" ([2 Corinthians 12:1–4](#)); and

WHEREAS, The doctrines of the afterlife are critical to a full understanding of salvation and repentance ([Luke 16:29–31](#); [John 3:16–18](#)); now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Baltimore, Maryland, June 10–11, 2014, reaffirm the sufficiency of biblical revelation over subjective experiential explanations to guide one's understanding of the truth about heaven and hell.

**January 15, 2015 update. Thanks to NPR editor Susan Vavrick for flagging this story.*

Nearly five years after it hit best-seller lists, a book that purported to be a 6-year-old boy's story of visiting angels and heaven after being injured in a bad car crash is being pulled from shelves. The young man at the center of *The Boy Who Came Back from Heaven*, Alex Malarkey, said this week that the story was all made up.

The book's publisher, Tyndale House, had promoted it as "a supernatural encounter that will give you new insights on Heaven, angels, and hearing the voice of God."

But Thursday, Tyndale House confirmed to NPR that it is taking "the book and all ancillary products out of print."

The decision to pull the book comes after Alex Malarkey wrote an open letter to retailer LifeWay and others who sell Christian books and religious materials. It was published this week on the [Pulpit and Pen website](#).

"I did not die. I did not go to Heaven," Alex wrote. He continued, "I said I went to heaven because I thought it would get me attention. When I made the claims that I did, I had never read the Bible. People have profited from lies, and continue to. They should read the Bible, which is enough. The Bible is the only source of truth. Anything written by man cannot be infallible."

He concluded, "Those who market these materials must be called to repent and hold the Bible as enough."

Here are a few key background details of the story: Alex Malarkey was paralyzed at the age of 6 when he was in a car wreck. He then spent two months in a coma. He's now a teenager. The book lists him as a co-author along with his father, Kevin Malarkey.

Calling the book a "spiritual memoir," The Washington Post notes that it "became part of a popular genre of 'heavenly tourism,' which has been controversial among orthodox Christians."

Alex's parents are now divorced; he and his siblings live with his mother, Beth Malarkey, who has previously spoken out against the book featuring her son. She has also said that profits from the book haven't been going to Alex. Another book about a boy who said he had gone to heaven, *Heaven Is For Real*, has been turned into a movie.

Last spring, Beth Malarkey wrote a blog post stating, "Alex's name and identity are being used against his wishes (I have spoken before and posted about it that Alex has tried to publicly speak out against the book), on something that he is opposed to and knows to be in error according to the Bible."

She added, "I am fully aware of what it feels like to be pulled in. There are many who are scamming and using the Word of God to do it. They are good, especially if you are not digging into your Bible and truly studying it. They study their audience and even read 'success' books to try to build better and bigger ... 'ministries/businesses.' "

"The devil's mouth is funny looking, with only a few moldy teeth. And I've never noticed any ears. His body has a human form, with two bony arms and two bony legs. He has no flesh on his body, only some moldy stuff. His robes are torn and dirty. I don't know about the color of the skin or robes—it's all just too scary to concentrate on these things!" Quote from [The Boy Who Came Back from Heaven](#)