

The Utter Impotence of the False Teachers (v.17)

VERSE 17 **These are springs without water** (Οὗτοί εἰσιν πηγαὶ ἄνυδροι [*pro./demonstr.n.m.p.*, *houtos*; “These”, + *pres.act.ind.3.p.*, *eimi*, + *n.f.p.*, *πηγή*, *pege*, *spring*, + *adj.n.f.p.*, *ἄνυδρος*, *anudros*, *without water*]), **and mists driven by a storm** (καὶ ὀμίχλαι ἐλαυνόμεναι ὑπὸ λαίλαπος [*conj.* + *n.f.p.*, *ὀμίχλη*, *omichle*, *mist*, + *pres.pass.pt.n.f.p.*, *ἐλαύνω*, *elauno*, *impel forward*, + *prep.w/gen.f.s.*, *λαίλαψ*, *lailaps*, *furious gust of wind*]), **for whom the black darkness has been reserved** (οἷς ὁ ζόφος τοῦ σκότους τετήρηται [*pro./rel.dat.m.p.*, *hos*, + *def.art.w/n.m.s.*, *zophos*, *gloom*; 5X: *Heb.12:18*; *2Pet.2:4,17*; *Jude.1:6,13*, + *def.art.w/gen.nt.s.*, *skotos*, *darkness*, + *pf.pass.ind.3.s.*, *τηρέω*, *tereo*, *guard*, *preserve*, *reserve*]).

ANALYSIS: VERSE 17

1. After his excursus on Balaam, Peter returns to the attack upon the liberals.
2. The seducers of Biblical Christianity are described in two striking metaphors in this verse.
3. They are “springs without water”.
4. This describes the unsatisfactory nature of their propaganda.
5. People (believers and unbelievers) come to it as to a “spring”, naively expecting thirst-quenching refreshment, only to find no drinkable water.
6. Only the person who is in touch with the pure waters of sound doctrine finds lasting satisfaction.
7. Heterodoxy (false doctrine) is all very novel, but it is totally unsatisfying.
8. Liberalism cannot quench the longing for righteousness (Mt.5:6).
9. They are also “mists driven by a storm.”
10. Aristotle (*Meteor.1.34b*) tells us that the ὀμίχλαι (*homichlai*; 1X) is the haze which heralds dry weather, but is so easily dispersed by a sharp gust of wind.
11. This metaphor contains two elements.
12. First, like the preceding metaphor, the proponents of liberalism are a source of bitter disillusionment to the parched traveler or anxious farmer.
13. Second, this metaphor speaks to the instability of the false teachers and the ephemeral nature of their teachings.
14. Second-hand bookstores are filled with their philosophical and psychological rubbish.
15. The latest offering is advertised as providing special insight to the unwary and naive.
16. Their teachings are unsubstantial and flimsy.
17. They cause a sensation (theological audacity) when the product of their untaught and depraved minds is paraded before the public.
18. These types come in many guises, but all fail to deliver that which brings true spirituality to the hapless listeners.
19. As for the darkness reserved for the liberal heretics, it is akin to the darkness that they cast over humanity.
20. The darkness reserved for them is a much thicker and eternal one.
21. This verse supports the interpretation that the primary subjects of this prophecy are unbelievers.
22. The phrase here is, literally, “the gloom of darkness” (ὁ ζόφος τοῦ σκότους).

23. The parallel expression in Jude.13 is “for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever”.
24. The statement here also parallels the one found in 2Pet.2:4, where the same noun for eternal darkness is applied to the angels of Gen.6 (cp. Jude.6).
25. So a special darkness is “reserved” (pf.pass.ind.3.p.s., *tereo*) for unbelievers.
26. Negative volition to the gospel spends eternity in darkness, since men love darkness and not the light of truth (Jn.3:19).
27. It is not for lack of light that these individuals end up in hell.
28. They of all people are especially culpable, having had close association with Christian teachings.
29. The liberalism of the nineteenth century was a reaction to the widespread Christian world-view of western civilization.
30. Darwinism was spawned during that century.
31. If evolution is true, then absolutes fly out the window.
32. With God out of the picture, men are free to formulate their own mores.
33. The structure of this verse is poetic and grandiose.
34. It is interesting to note how many Homeric and tragic words like *zophos* (“darkness”), *phthengomai* (“to utter”), *homichlai* (“mists”) passed into common use in *koine* Greek and, indeed, have appeared in modern Greek.

The Impact on the Untrained (v.18)

VERSE 18 For speaking out arrogant words of vanity (γὰρ φθεγγόμενοι ὑπέρογκα ματαιότητος [*conj. + pres.dep.pt.n.m.p., φθέγγομαι, phthengomai, speak clearly, articulate; 3X: Acts.4:18; 2Pet.2:16,18, + adj.acc.nt.p., ὑπέρογκα, hyperogka, excessive size, overgrown; hence, of speech, bombastic, pompous; 1X, cp. Jude.1:16, + gen.f.s., ματαιότης, mataiotes, emptiness, nonsense; “vanity”*]) **they entice by fleshly desires, by sensuality** (δεδεάζουσιν ἐν ἐπιθυμίαις σαρκὸς ἀσελγείαις [*pres.act.ind.3.p., δελεάζω, deleazo, lure, entice; 2X : cf. v.14, + prep.w.instr.f.s., epithumia, desire, lust, + gen.f.s., sarkos, flesh, + instr.f.p., ἀσελγεία, aslegeia, sensuality*]), **those who barely escape from the ones who live in error** (τοὺς ἀποφεύγοντας ὀλίγως τοὺς ἀναστρεφόμενους ἐν πλάνῃ [*def.art.w/pres.act.pt.acc.m.p., ἀποφεύγω, apopheugo, escape; 3X: 2Pet.1:4; 2:18; 2:20, + adv., oligos, scarcely, just barely, + def.art. w/pres.pass.pt.acc.m.p., ἀναστρέφω, anastrepho, behave; live, conduct oneself; cp. 1Pet.1:17; “live”, + prep.w/loc.f.s., plane, error*]),

ANALYSIS: VERSE 18

1. In plain language, their propaganda consists of mouthing big, bombastic words (adj.acc.nt.p., ὑπέρογκος, *hyperogkos*, of excessive size, overgrown; of speech, it means bombastic; occurring here and in the parallel, Jude.16) in their discourses (that is the nuance of the vb. φθέγγομαι, *phthengomai*, translated “speaking out”; 3X: Acts.4:18; 2Pet.2:16,18)

2. But their words, for all the pretense, amount to nothing of significance (ματαιότητος, *mataiotes* is a descriptive genitive; it means emptiness/nonsense).
3. Hence, the translation “vanity”.
4. “Vanity” is anything that will not stand the test of time (or eternity).
5. “Vanity” is a word in the Bible that depicts all things as fleeting and ephemeral (Eccl.1:2,14; 3:19; 12:8).
6. Even heaven and earth (as we know it) will pass away, but the Word of our God abides forever.
7. Ostentatious verbosity is their weapon to ensnare the unwary, and “sensuality” is their bait.
8. By appealing to the lust grid of the STA, with particular emphasis on sex lust, “they entice” their victims.
9. It is used in that fashion in Jam.1:14.
10. The verb “entice” (pres.act.ind.3.p., δελιάζω, *deleazo*) means to bait a trap or hook.
11. Again, speech is the hook and the promise of sexual liberation is the bait.
12. The words “fleshly lusts”, or “lusts of the flesh”, stand in apposition to “sensuality” (instr.f.p., *aselgeia*).
13. The latter defines the former (i.e., it is sexual vice that is one, if not the primary, subject of their grandiose sophistry).
14. This (sexual liberation) is exactly what many modern liberals advocate.
15. Their presentation is sometimes couched in high-sounding academic jargon with the usual statistical appeal.
16. Others simply ridicule the “puritan ethic” in a frontal assault.
17. The practitioners of sexual liberation come in all shapes and sizes (Hugh Hefner/Dr. Ruth/Madonna, etc., et. al., ad nauseam).
18. The young and hormone-driven are especially susceptible.
19. But Peter draws our attention to a particular category that is especially vulnerable.
20. They are described as “those who barely escape from the ones who live in error”.
21. The phrase “the ones who live in error” refers to unbelievers, or in Peter’s day, pagans (cp. Eph.2:3, the vb. ἀναστρέφω, *anastrepho*, live).
22. “Those who barely escape” is the present active participle from ἀποφεύγω (*apopheugo*), which means to escape, and it is associated with the adverb ὀλίγως (*holigos*), meaning “just barely”.
23. This points to either new converts or believers who have minimal familiarity with the WOG.
24. The gross effect of the false teachers was to corrupt new converts, and we know what Jesus said about causing such ones to stumble.
25. The new or untrained converts are the unstable of vs. 14 (“enticing unstable souls”).
26. Again, those referred to at the end of the verse are pagans/unbelievers and not, as often suggested, the false teachers.
27. For it is the latter that are doing the corrupting; they are not the culture which the adjusted have recently left.
28. The Valentinians, according to Irenaeus, were adept at presenting the young believers with high-sounding talk, which acted as a cover for the basest of obscenity.
29. Nor has the tendency to dress up vice as virtue died in succeeding generations.
30. All sorts of vice is sanctioned in the name of deity.
31. Certain Gnostic teachers sanctioned sexual vice in a sort of spirit over matter.

32. They contended that all that mattered was the salvation of the immortal soul which was secured through the knowledge (*gnosis*) that they imparted, and it mattered little what a person did with the body, as it was temporal.
33. Others taught that the deeply spiritual should express their religion sexually, which was what paganism taught.
34. Paul faced similar teaching about the body in 1Cor.6, and he countered it by asserting that the body is indeed important to God, for it is the temple of God the HS, and those who defile the temple through vice will have their temple destroyed (SUD).
35. This consideration must always set boundaries to the Christian's exercise of his liberty in Christ (see v.19).

VERSE 19 promising them freedom (ἐπαγγελλόμενοι αὐτοῖς ἐλευθερίαν [*pres.dep.pt.n.m.p.*, ἐπαγγέλλομαι, *epangellomai*, *promise*, + *pro.dat.m.p.*, *autos*, + *acc.f.s.*, ἐλευθερία, *eleutheria*, *freedom*]) **while they themselves are slaves of corruption** (αὐτοὶ δοῦλοι ὑπάρχοντες τῆς φθορᾶς [*pro.n.m.p.*, *autos*, + *n.m.p.*, *doulos*, *slave*, + *pres.act.pt.n.m.p.*, ὑπάρχω, *huparcho*, *be at one's disposal*; "are slaves", + *def.art.w/gen.f.s.*, *phthora*, *corruption*]); **for by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved** (γάρ ὃ τις ἡττηται τούτῳ δεδούλωται [*conj.*, *gar*, + *pro./rel.dat.m.s.*, *hos*; "by what", + *pro./indef.n.m.s.*, *tis*, "a man", + *pf.dep.ind.3.s.*, ἡττάομαι, *hettaomai*, *be put to the worse; hence, defeated*; "overcome"; 2X: 2Pet.2:19,20, + *pro./demonstr.dat.m.s.*, *houtos*, + *pf.pass.ind.3.s.*, δουλῶ, *douloo*, *be enslaved {pass.}*]).

ANALYSIS: VERSE 19

1. The psychological aspect of this verse is profound.
2. The false teachers "promise...freedom" – the very thing they have not got!
3. In the quest for self-expression, they have fallen into bondage to the ISTA.
4. To people (in this case, born-again believers) who, through faith in Christ, have begun to taste the paradox of freedom from the *phthora* (the corruption of the pre-salvation experience through voluntary bondage to Christ), the heretics propose a new paradox: freedom from the rules imposed by their new Master – only to plunge them back into the bondage in which they themselves lived.
5. The heretics would have us go back to the very things that are supposed to be in large measure in the rear view mirror of our Ph1 adjustment (cp. 1Pet.4:3; Eph.2:2,3).
6. We as believers are no longer to live like unbelievers – for the lusts of the flesh.
7. The vaunted liberty (so-called) of the liberals constitutes license, and generates a new kind of bondage – bondage to the lusts of the flesh.
8. On the other hand, bondage to the "perfect law of liberty" (Jam.1:25), which is reviled by the liberals, leads in fact to a liberation/emancipation that transcends anything the heretics could imagine ("the truth shall set you free").

9. Peter has already declared, in 2Pet.1:3,4, that true liberty (escape from the relentless grip of *pthora*, corruption), comes through the *epignosis* (true or full knowledge) of Jesus Christ (BD).
10. Theological liberals champion grace and love over law, but this leads only to license (cf. Jude.4).
11. The two spheres (grace and law) are not combatants, but correlatives.
12. Law (God's perfect +R contained in moral precepts) is the hedge encompassing God's garden of grace.
13. Scripture suggests that there is a corrupted articulation of grace, in such verses as Col.1:6 and 1Pet.5:12.
14. Notice the subtlety of the two present participles in this verse.
15. They keep on chattering about freedom while all the while they keep on being slaves to STA lust.
16. Jesus told the Jews, who prided themselves on their liberty, that they were actually slaves to their sinful natures (Jn.8:44).
17. Personal sin of any kind places us in a state of slavery (Jn.8:34).
18. The second half of the verse contains an axiomatic statement applicable to all.
19. It involves a warning against lapsing into the kind of STA activity that is advocated by the heretics.
20. The axiom applies to both the false teachers and their victims, mentioned in v.18.
21. Their victims include gullible, unwary believers.
22. The affirmation states a moral truism applicable to all mankind.
23. Any STA vice that enslaves the "real you" (the soul) makes you its slave.
24. The resulting bondage produces loss, death, and misery.
25. Rebound and a determination to resist temptation is the way out of this swamp.

VERSE 20 **For if after they have escaped the defilements of the world** (γὰρ εἰ ἀποφυγόντες τὰ μιάσματα τοῦ κόσμου [*conj. + part./condit., ei, + aor.act.pt.n.m.p., ἀποφεύγω, apopheugo, escape; 3X: 2Pet.1:4; 2:18,20 + def.art.w/acc.nt.p., μίασμα, miasma, defilement, pollution; 1X, + def.art.w/gen.m.s., kosmos*]) **by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ** (ἐν ἐπιγνώσει τοῦ κυρίου [ἡμῶν] καὶ σωτῆρος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ [*prep. w/instr.m.s., epignosis, + def.art.w/gen.m.s., kurios, + conj. + gen.m.s., soter, + gen.m.s., Iesus Christos*]), **they are again entangled in them and are overcome** (τούτοις δὲ πάλιν ἐμπλακέντες ἡττῶνται [*pro./demon.dat.nt.p., houtos, + conj., de, + adv., palin, again, + aor.pass.pt.n.m.p., ἐμπλέκω, empleko, entangle; 2X: 2Tim.2:4, + pres.dep.ind.3.s., ἡττάομαι, hettaomai; be the worse for; hence, be defeated, conquered; 2X: 2Pet.2:19,20; "are overcome"*]), **the last state has become worse for them than the first** (τὰ ἔσχατα γέγονεν χείρονα αὐτοῖς τῶν πρώτων [*def.art.w/adj.n.nt.p., eschatos, last, + pf.act.ind.3.s.,*

ginomai, become, + adj./compar.n.nt.p., χείρων, cheiron, worse, + pro.dat.m.p., autos; "them", + def.art.w/adj.gen.nt.p., protos, first}).

ANALYSIS: VERSE 20

1. These final three verses refer to the victims of the heretics.
2. Specifically, the reference is to unwary believers who are caught up in the liberal propaganda.
3. This is a carry over from vs.18, where the soft targets of the propaganda are described as "those who barely escape (born again believers) from the ones who live in error (unbelievers)."
4. However, the majority of interpreters hold that these verses are in reference to the false teachers.
5. This position is problematic, as it requires either viewing the false teachers as believers, which contradicts the reference to their final judgment in v.17 ("for whom the black darkness has been reserved"), or interpreting the phrase, "after they have escaped the defilements of the world" (v.20) as something less than actual conversion.
6. The subject(s) of the first class condition ("For if...has become...") is the anarthrous participle "after they have escaped" (aor.act.pt.n.m.p., ἀποφεύγω, *apopheugo*), which is generally understood to refer to believers in v.18 (as in the other two occurrences in the N.T., and all in 2Peter: 2:4 and 2:18).
7. If 2Pet.2:4 (all agree) and 2:18 (most) refer to Ph1 deliverance via forgiveness and positional sanctification, then it seems arbitrary to make the reference here to an empty profession of faith (as in the Ryrie footnote) or temporary moral reformation apart from actual conversion.
8. In general, these verses violate the profile of the false teachers reflected in vv.1-19.
9. "Escaped", here and in 2Pet:2:4 and 2:18, refers to passing from the realm of spiritual death and defilement to spiritual life and cleansing.
10. The noun "defilements" (τὰ μιάσματα) occurs only here and refers to the contamination associated with unchecked STA activity in an unsaved state.
11. The positive unsaved experience constant defilement from the source of their environment – "the world".
12. This defilement is parallel to "corruption" in 2Pet.2:4, which has the connotation of judgment.
13. Here also, the corruption is said to be that which is "in the world through lust".
14. In 2Pet.2:18 the escape is said to be "from (the fate) of the ones living in error".
15. At salvation, all pre-salvation sins are forgiven and the absolute tyranny of the ISTA is interrupted.
16. Here the escape is made possible "by the *epignosis* of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ".
17. *Epignosis* refers to real and complete knowledge here and throughout the N.T.
18. In 2Peter this noun occurs also at vv.1:2,3,8.
19. These verses use the term of spiritual information that enables believers to inherit blessing and be productive.
20. The escape is made possible by information inherent in the gospel and basic doctrine.
21. The good news of salvation and basic doctrine enables believers to break the grip of unrelenting STA lusts with the accompanying defilement.
22. The defilement refers to moral filth, as well as error in belief (false cosmogony, religion, etc).

23. *Epignosis* lifts the individual out of this sewer of satanic deception and danger.
24. When *epignosis* doctrine is rejected or distorted by alien teachings, as in the instance of liberalism, believers are “again entangled”.
25. The aorist participle “entangled” (ἐμπλέκω) is a fishing term occurring only here in the N.T.
26. The adverb “again” looks backward to the pre-salvation condition.
27. “They” is represented as the demonstrative pronoun (dat.nt.p.) οὗτος (*houtos*), meaning “these very ones”.
28. The Greek also has the conjunction δέ, which means “now”, to indicate a further development.
29. The literal rendering is: “now these having been entangled again are overcome...”.
30. “And are overcome” is the aorist indicative (3pl.) of ἡττάομαι (*hettaomai*) and means, literally, “to be made worse off”; hence, “to be overcome”.
31. Believers who apostatize are spiritually defeated (willing POWs) through entanglement with the vice that is in the world through lust.
32. This verb also occurs in v.19 in connection with the axiom, “for by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved” (2X in the N.T: 2Pet.2:19,20).
33. This verse is without doubt dealing with reversionism.
34. A believer who has had some exposure to BD ends up living like an unbeliever caught up in false teaching and living according to the sinful trend of Adam.
35. Peter refers to this condition as “the last state” (τὰ ἔσχατα).
36. The “last state” is easy enough to identify – it is reversionism.
37. In this case, reversionism that is full-blown, accompanied with the embracing of false doctrine with attendant STA lusts.
38. This state, he asserts, “has become worse than the first state”.
39. The “first state” can only be the pre-salvation life.
40. How is the last state (believer in reversionism) worse than the first (unbeliever)?
41. In both states the individual is enslaved to the STA with its lusts, but being a believer in Jesus Christ is infinitely superior to the alternative.
42. So how are such types worse off?
43. The answer is: when they are unsaved, yet positive, their chances of finding the truth are guaranteed, but when they are brainwashed by liberal propaganda, their chances of recovery are minimal.
44. The casualties of this chapter are believers who abandoned orthodoxy for heterodoxy.
45. We are not simply dealing with believers who got caught up in sensational sins of the flesh.
46. Recovery from carnality, even gross carnality, is common enough, but recovery where there is a volitional repudiation of the fundamentals is minimal, if not nil.
47. This is in the same vein as the no-second-chance category of Hebrews six.
48. Apostasy, where there is intellectual repudiation of the faith on the part of a believer, is worse only in the limited sense that there is little or no chance that they will recover.
49. Peter’s observation is to be taken within narrow parameters.

Almost Better Off (v.21)

VERSE 21 For it would be better for them (γὰρ ἦν κρείττον αὐτοῖς [*conj.* + *imperf.act.ind.3.s.*, *eimi*; “it would be”, + *adj./compar.n.nt.s.*, κρείττων, *kreitton*, *better*, + *pro.dat.n.p.*, *autos*, “them”]) **not to have known the way of righteousness** (μὴ ἐπεγνωκέναι τὴν ὁδὸν τῆς δικαιοσύνης [*neg.* + *pf.act.infin.*, ἐπιγινώσκω, *epignosko*, *know*, + *def.art.w/acc.f.s.*, *hodos*, *way*, + *def.art.w/gen.f.s.*, *dikaiousune*, *righteousness*]), **than having known it** (ἢ ἐπιγνοῦσιν [*conj.* *e*, *than*, + *aor.act.pt.dat.m.p.*, *epiginosko*, *know*]), **to turn away from the holy commandment handed on to them** (ὑποστρέψαι ἐκ τῆς ἁγίας ἐντολῆς παραδοθείσης αὐτοῖς [*aor.act.infin.*, ὑποστρέψω, *hupostrepho*, *turn away*, + *prep.w/def.art.w/adj.gen.f.s.*, *hagios*, *holy*, + *gen.f.s.*, ἐντολή, *entole*, *commandment*, + *aor.pass.pt.gen.f.s.*, παραδίδωμι, *paradidomi*, *hand down*, + *pro.dat.m.p.*, *autos*; “them”]).

ANALYSIS: VERSE 21

1. The statement in v.21 is even more remarkable than the one in v.20.
2. The key is to be found in the use of the imperfect tense (act.ind.) of the verb *eimi*, translated “it would be”.
3. The imperfect tense in the Greek usually indicates linear action in past time.
4. If that were the case here, the phrase would read, “Not to have known the way of righteousness was better.”
5. The obvious question would be, but what about now?
6. The temporal emphasis is remote here and some other aspect is emphasized.
7. It is generally recognized that the imperfect tense can be used in other ways, including a nuance that would require the subjunctive in other tenses.
8. The imperfect is deficient here, as it only occurs with the indicative.
9. A.T. Robertson discusses the “potential” use of the tense and illustrates it this way: “An example is found in Rom.9:3, where Paul almost expresses a moral wrong. He holds himself back from the abyss by the tense.”
10. The grammarian Moule uses a different designation, but follows the same reasoning.
11. He says, “Desiderative Imperfect...is chiefly used in expressing a wish. It seems to soften a remark, and make it more vague or more difficult or polite: as we might say ‘I could almost do so-and-so.’ Cf. *euchomen gar anathema einai* Rom.9:3, I could almost pray to be accursed – the Imperfect softening the shock of the daring statement or expressing awe at the terrible thought.”
12. If this instance of the imperfect is understood as “potential”, or “desiderative,” the idea would be, “It would almost be better for them...”
13. In point of fact, it is not better to have never believed, than to have believed and apostatized.
14. Peter’s expression is designed to draw attention to the awful consequences of becoming like the unbelievers who despise the distinctives of a Bible-based faith.

15. Intellectual repudiation carries with it the severest of penalties in terms of any prospect of Ph2 adjustment to God.
16. The words “the way of righteousness” are synonymous with the “the way of truth” in 2Pet.1:2.
17. Both expressions refer to the realm of Bible doctrine, including the Person and Work of Christ.
18. The heretics of this chapter are unbelievers who deny the reality of Christ (2Pet.2:1).
19. “To turn away” refers to reversionism and a kind of reversionism that is the most deadly in terms of any future repentance/recovery.
20. It is the same type of reversionism found in Hebrews chapter six (where more mature believers are in view).
21. In this chapter, “unstable” or immature believers are in view (cf. vv.14,18).
22. Wherever there is a wholesale repudiation of orthodoxy, there is little or no chance that the individual will make a full recovery.
23. So Peter is inspired to warn believers of the devastating nature of this category of reversionism.
24. The next difficulty presented by this verse is the identification of what Peter labels “the holy commandment”.
25. This exact expression occurs nowhere else in the N.T.
26. Now we will see what it (the holy commandment) is not.
27. Among those who regard the final verses (20-22) of this chapter as referring to believers, the phrases “the way of righteousness” and “the holy commandment” is, for them, simply a reference to moral depravity apart from actual apostasy.
28. In other words, reversionism of a lascivious nature is what Peter is going to extremes to warn believers against.
29. Is there any evidence that carnality involving immorality and dissipation is any more deadly than, say, legalistic reversionism?
30. According to what we observe in Scripture, the former is not viewed as holding its victims more so than some other brand of reversionism (a legalism or monetary grid).
31. The Bible presents a variety of examples of those who fell into lasciviousness and dissipation and who came out of it (Corinthians, prodigal son, etc.).
32. Many a prodigal does not repudiate intellectually the faith of his salvation.
33. His understanding grows dim and is fogged, but he doesn’t necessarily embrace a belief system that assaults Christian belief.
34. We have seen in our own experience those who have recovered from gross immorality (it is not uncommon).
35. So how is their “before” better than their “after”?
36. During the time they are “out there”, they have in their souls a remembrance of the things which can snatch them out of the fire (again, as the younger son did in the story).
37. To leave the way of experiential holiness and return to the former (pre-salvation) path of carnality, while risky, is not even in the same league with the scenario of this chapter.
38. David didn’t repudiate the realm of doctrine in “Operation Bathsheba”.
39. The typical fundy read on this is that a believer swamped by carnality is much more miserable than he/she was as an unbeliever doing the same things.

40. This may only be the case where the believer is constantly assaulted from his/her conscience with the doctrine of SG3 (loss of the crown, which isn't an issue for the untrained or immature).
41. Back to the question as to the identity of the "holy commandment".
42. There are many imperatives/commandments prescribed for believers living in the CA and they are all "holy".
43. The salvation adjustment involves a holy commandment.
44. The "holy commandment" is found in 1Tim.6:13,14 (cp. 1Jn3:23, which sums up the Christian experience in terms of Ph1 and Ph2).
45. It is mentioned in passing in 2Pet.3:2.
46. It has to do with intake and application of BD until the end of Ph2.
47. Peter summarizes Christianity as "the sacred commandment".
48. The verb "handed down" refers to both the oral (face-to-face teaching) and written (canon of Scripture) heritage of those who have heard and believed.
49. This expression is paralleled in Jude.3 as "the faith once of all delivered to the saints".
50. And as such, it refers to Christian doctrine, with all its moral implications, which have been handed down to us via apostolic authority.

VERSE 22 It has happened to them according to the true proverb (συμβέβηκεν αὐτοῖς τὸ τῆς ἀληθοῦς παροιμίας [*pf.act.ind.3.s.*, συμβαίνω, *sumbaino*, *happen*; *dramatic perfect*, + *pro.dat.m.p.*, *autos*; "them", + *def.art.n.nt.s.*, "it", + *def.art.w/adj.gen.f.s.*, ἀληθής, *alethes*, *true*, + *gen.f.s.*, παροιμία, *paroimia*, *proverb*]), **"A DOG RETURNS TO ITS OWN VOMIT,"** (Κύων ἐπιστρέψας ἐπὶ τὸ ἴδιον ἐξέραμα [*n.m.s.*, κύων, *kuon*, *dog*, + *aor.act.pt.n.m.s.*, ἐπιστρέφω, *epistrepho*, *turn back*, + *prep.w/def.art.w/adj.acc.nt.s.*, ἴδιος, *idios*, *one's own*, + *acc.nt.s.*, ἐξέραμα, *ezerama*, *vomit*; *IX*]) **and, "A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire** (καὶ ἥσυχος λουσαμένη εἰς κυλισμὸν βορβόρου [*conj.*, *and*, + *n.f.s.*, *hus*, *sow*, + *aor.mid.pt.n.f.s.*, λούω, *louo*, *wash*, + *prep.w./acc.m.s.*, κυλισμός, *kulismos*, *a rolling*; *wallowing*; *IX*, + *gen.m.s.*, βόρβορος, *borboros*, *slime*, *mire*, *mud*; *muck*; *IX*])."

ANALYSIS: VERSE 22

1. Peter concludes this prophetic chapter with two proverbs which depict the status quo of believers who apostatize.
2. Their punishment is that they are permanently given over to that which their volition has chosen.
3. These two similes are particularly apt considering the animal comparisons seen in this chapter.
4. Here, the comparison is to believers who, in reversionism, take on certain repugnant habits of certain unclean animals.
5. Peter calls these expressions proverbial.

6. He probably took them from some popular collection.
7. The first appears to be Biblical (Prov.26:11), the second is not.
8. The second appears in the Syrian *Akihar* story; it follows with a proverb.
9. “My son, you have been to me like the swine that had been to the bath, and when it saw a muddy ditch, went down and washed in it, and cried to its companions, ‘Come and bathe’”.
10. A dog will vomit up that which makes him sick, but later will be found sniffing the very thing that had made him sick.
11. This disgusting habit depicts the believer who repudiates the grossness of the former error and turns back to a repackaged version, i.e., liberalism.
12. The pig who has been bathed represents Ph1 cleansing from sins, only to go back and wallow in the muck of doctrine of demons and sin.
13. Peter has spent considerable effort to inform and warn believers concerning lust masquerading as religion.
14. Modern liberalism is often dressed in religious clothing, but it is nothing better than ancient paganism revisited.

END: SECOND PETER CHAPTER TWO

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