SBC Lin Shufen

28 Mar 2017 Speaker #7

***Don't Be Misled***

**2 Peter 3:3**

Cyclical Inductive Outline Manuscript

**Topic:** Falsehood

**Subject:** The erroneous ways of false teachers

**Complement:** are ridiculing of the truth and sensual.

**Purpose:** The listeners will seek to guard against false teaching and live godly lives.

# Introduction

### [ILLs of scams]

### Many aspiring models have being cheated by modelling agencies in Singapore. Out of temptation for fame and easy cash, they were tricked either of money, into stripping for camera or even offering sex.

### Crime rates in Singapore showed an increase in online commercial offences, especially scams offering credit-for-sex and internet love scams, mainly by foreign syndicates. Victims aged 21 to 74, handed over about $12 million. It works on instant gratification, so people seeking certain things on certain websites are more impulsive to pay or carry on.

### These statistics show that numerous people, out of ignorance or temptation for gains, were deceived as a result of trusting in deceptive agents or advisors. We should learn to be cautious against anyone who tries to mislead us in life, and not be fooled by them, so as to avoid unnecessary painful experience and losses.

### Now, ever since you became a Christian, have you ever found yourself being misled by a wrong Christian teaching? Nod your head if you have.

### Wouldn't it be helpful if you are warned in advance, to keep you from any irreversible losses and regrets?

### To help you be vigilant against false teaching (before Jesus comes back), we are going to find out how we could discern the erroneous ways of false teachers.

### 4. Let's turn our bible to 2 Peter chapter 3. The context for this passage is that the apostle Peter was warning believers about false teachers and their destiny. In 2 Peter Chapter 3, he refutes those false teachings that have been affecting the church. He also encourages the believers to live holy lives, in light of Christ's second coming and final judgment. Peter reminds the believers, in verse 2, of the basis and authority of his teaching. Instead of listening to false teachers, believers should recall and heed the words of the holy prophets and the true teaching of Christ's commandment delivered by the apostles.

### 5. Peter highlights two traits of false teachers that we should discern, as we await Christ's return. It is in found in 2 Peter 3:3. Let's all read this together, 1, 2, 3...

### 6. "Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with *their* mocking, following after their own lusts" (2 Peter 3:3; NASB)

(As we anticipate Christ's return, how could we detect the traits of false teachers? Firstly, verse 3a tells us that ...)

# I. False teachers ridicule the Word of God. (verse 3a)

## They question and deny the future reality of Christ's return, based on their own reasoning.

We can see from verse 4 to 7 that the false teachers express skepticism. They justify their mockery by saying that nothing obvious in the world has changed since the beginning of creation, even after their ancestors have died. Many people expect that Christ would come in their generation's lifetime, but the predicted time frame for Christ's return has long passed. Thus, they question the lack of evidence to believe in the second coming of Christ, that this world will eventually come to an end, and the reality of a future judgment on the evil. Not only do they arrogantly deny that Christ will return, but also mock those who hold this belief, which they do not take seriously.

Though these are people who are familiar with the Scriptures, they ignore, overlook and reject the truth of God's revelation. That the God who creates and sustains this whole world, has the power to also destroy it. As Creator and ultimate Judge, God rules His creation and determines the beginning and end of this universe.

1. When we rely on our human understanding instead of trusting in God's Word, we are implying that we have doubts about God's character or power, or are wiser than Him.

2. For instance, the false teachers argue over the unfulfilled promise of Christ's second coming. Based on philosophical arguments, they rule out future judgment, and misunderstood the delay in Christ' return as His lack of power to do so nor intervene in the affairs of this world. They see God's creation, yet refuse to recognize the Creator and His authority.

 Ironically, such false teachers being rampant is one of the predicated signs of the last days, yet they deny the very fact of the last days.

## They challenge the validity of Christ's promise of His return, by behaving waywardly against God's Word.

## These are referred to as heretics or opponents of the Christian faith. 2 Peter 2:10-20 describe them as those who wilfully "blaspheme the glorious ones", are ignorant, deceives others, have gone astray from God's truth, speak "loud boasts of folly", and are entangled with the sins of the world.

## 1. When believers lose their trust and hope in God's Word, they tend to lose their respect and love for God in their lives. They will disregard God and His ways, rather than trusting in His good and perfect purpose for them.

## 2. For instance, you might have been in a trying situation and your prayers to God remain unanswered for a long time. Feeling discouraged, you decided to give up praying, despite what the bible says about perseverance in prayer. Instead, you rather strive hard on your own and boast of your achievements. Or you might be going through trials and sufferings over a prolonged period, and you perceived that God has been absent and His promises unreal in your life. Out of disappointment or even frustrations, you decided to abandon your faith and forsake your calling to serve Him.

 (Besides ridiculing the truth of God's Word, the last part of verse 3 wants us to be aware that ...)

# II. False teachers are lured by their sensual pleasures. (verse 3b)

## Sensual pleasures means self-centered desires or craving of the flesh and of the world.

Sensuality is a total devotion to the gratification of the senses, to the point of disregarding the soul and spirit. It is an abuse of our God-given senses. Some feast their eyes on forbidden images such as pornography. Some feast their ears on ungodly conversations, jokes, or music. Some indulge in “wild parties”, drug and alcohol abuse, or sexual immorality. The sensual follows the sinful desires of the flesh without boundaries or restraint. Ephesians 4:19 describes the ungodly as “having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed.” Yet, the false teachers view achieving a state of pleasure is the highest goal of human existence.

1. Some Christians are addicted to or indulging excessively in food, gaming, shopping, movies/ drama series, Facebook, social media, or pursuing wealth, branded goods, success and status for personal glory.

## Depending on oneself rather than God, is an act of disobedience to God's will.

Sensuality is in direct opposition to God’s desire for us to live “by the Spirit”. Galatians 5:16 says, “Walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.” As God's children, we are to walk by the Spirit, and not indulge in sensuality. We are to also avoid loving “the things of this world,” which include the “lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.” (1 John 2:15-16)

1. When we try to satisfy our cravings and emptiness through means that the world offers, rather than seeking God our true source of life, it causes us to ignore Him in our lives. It breaks our fellowship with Him, as we replace the priority of God with self and worldly pleasures.

## 2. We may think we can make our life work out well by our own strength, but things in turn became a big mess and get out of control. In John 15:5, Jesus calls us to remain in Him, as apart from Him, our Christian life will be ineffective, meaningless and fruitless.

3. When I was doing my final year project at a research institute in Biopolis, I was glad to work on a very interesting, cutting-edge topic that is the study of differentiating induced synthetic stem cells into various cell lines. Soon, I found myself enjoying the research process, which went smoothly by God's grace. Particularly, I enjoyed taking microscopic pictures of my fluorescent-labeled cells likes these. I spent day and night working on that project, which I discovered is a God-given passion. But unknowingly, it subtly became an obsession that drew me away from God, as my time was mostly spent in the cold lab, with little time for God and people. That was when I realized that my research work had taken over my devotion to God. Though work alone is not a sin, but it could be when it is to the extent of excessive indulgence.

4. Some people use busyness, sleep, alcohol or drugs to temporarily numb the pain from facing certain problems in their lives.

(The false teachers not only indulged in sensual pleasures but also influenced others to do so.)

## C. Living in self-gratification stumbles and draws away unstable believers.

1. When people thought they found the way to be happy, they inevitably influence the weaker Christians with their worldly lifestyles. The heretical teaching that lead to immorality could appeal to many new converts.

2. When LGBT, idolatry or materialism are found within Christian communities, do they signal to others that they are acceptable lifestyles in the sight of God? But rather they stumble them.

## D. Denial of a future judgment and reward leads one to live in sensual pleasures.

Those who believe that Christ is not returning, it gives them no reason to anticipate a future judgment by God nor the need to be accountable to God. They only focus on the life here and now, which they will experience, and give in to licentious or immoral living.

1. Having the mindset that Christ will never return, gives Christians no incentive to pursue godly lives. Such wrong mindset leads to wrong attitudes and behaviors.

2. People tend to do what they will be inspected on, not what they are expected of. For instance, if without the heavy fines imposed for littering and spitting in public, will Singapore still be kept clean and green? If we think there is no appraisal for our work performance, will we still be motivated to do our best? Similarly, just as imposing fines motivate people to abide to the laws, being informed of the reality of a future judgment ought to motivate us to pursue a life of holiness and devoid of sensuality.

(So, what is Peter's warning to us? This entire verse is cautioning us to ...)

# Conclusion

### Beware that false teachers portray which two traits? They ridicule the truth and are sensual.

### Signs of Christ's approaching return is that false teachers will scorn God's Word and be tempted by self-gratification. --> (blank ppt slide)

### Let's take a moment to reflect, what false teaching you have encountered that needs to be corrected or guarded against? Is there an unbelief or rebellious attitude in your heart towards God and His Word? Or are you still secretly clinging on to sensual pleasures, thinking that you can please both Jesus and your flesh?

### What is God saying to you and telling you to do specifically about living a godly life in preparing for Christ's return? Jesus Christ will surely return, as promised in Scriptures, and will bring about the consummation of His kingdom and final judgment. Jesus wants to set you free from the worthless things and revive you in His way.

### Pray for and inform those whom you know have been misled by false teachers.

4. Imagine that every person has a screen on our forehead, that records every aspect of our life from birth to death. Eventually, each of us will have to be judged by Jesus Christ, who oversees our life. We are accountable to Him for all the words and deeds done on earth, whether good or evil. All our ways will be exposed.

May we not shrink back at Christ's coming, but look forward with hope in His promise by living in a pure and holy life.

Prayer: Lord, we thank You for Your Word of Truth that is able to keep us from being misled. Would you help us to be discerning and guard against false teaching, that we may live a life set apart as holy and pleasing to You. May You grant us grace and empower us to overcome temptations and sensuality. Direct our hearts to follow You whole-heartedly. May You also keep us walking in step with Your Spirit every moment, and prepare us to meet You face-to-face one day. In Jesus' most precious Name we pray. Amen.

**Epistle Homiletical Outline**

***Don't Be Misled***

**2 Peter 3:3 (Cyclical Inductive form)**

*Purpose:*The listeners will seek to guard against false teaching and live godly lives.

# Introduction

### Interest: Statistics of people being cheated to raise awareness to avoid being misled by deceivers.

### Need: Warnings to avoid any irreversible regrets.

### Subject: How could we discern the erroneous ways of false teachers?

### Background: The apostle Peter was giving warnings to believers about false teachers and their destiny.

### Preview: Today's text shows two traits of false teachers that we should discern, as we await Christ's return. The apostle Peter gives us the warning in 2 Peter 3:3.

### Text: "Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with *their* mocking, following after their own lusts" (2 Peter 3:3; NASB)

(As we anticipate Christ's return, how could we detect the traits of false teachers? Firstly, verse 3a tells us that ...)

# I. False teachers ridicule the Word of God. (verse 3a)

## They question and deny the future reality of Christ's return, based on their own reasoning. (verse 4)

## They challenge the validity of Christ's promise of His return, by behaving waywardly against God's Word. (2 Peter 2:10-20)

(Besides ridiculing the truth of God's Word, the last part of verse 3 wants us to be aware that ...)

# II. False teachers are lured by their sensual pleasures. (verse 3b)

## Sensual pleasures means self-centered desires or craving of the flesh and of the world.

## Depending on oneself rather than God, is an act of disobedience to God's will.

## C. Living in self-gratification stumbles and draws away unstable believers.

## D. Denial of a future judgment and reward leads one to live in sensual pleasures.

(So, what is Peter's warning to us? This entire verse is cautioning us to ...)

# Conclusion

### Beware of false teachers who ridicule the truth and are sensual. (MI)

### The time nearing Christ's return is that false teachers will scorn God's Word and be tempted by self-gratification. (MI restated)

### Application:

### Which false teaching that you have encountered needs to be corrected or guarded against?

### Pray for anyone whom you know have been misled by the conduct of false teachers.

4. Story on our accountability to God for all your words and deeds. Prayer.

**Epistle Exegetical Outline**

1. Study of text

"Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with *their* mocking, following after their own lusts" (2 Peter 3:3; NASB)

a. Background context:

In Chapter 2, the apostle Peter gives warning about the false teachers and prophets and their destiny. In Chapter 3, he refutes those false teachings that have been affecting the church, and encourages the believers to live holy lives, in light of Christ's second coming and final judgment (2 Peter 3:7,11-12). In the earlier verse, Peter states that the basis and authority of his teaching is on the words and commandments given by God through the holy prophets in the past and the apostles (2 Peter 3:2).

b. Questions with answers:

i. What is the purpose of communicating this statement?

Peter wants to emphasize to the believers on the importance of being vigilant against falsehood and discern the truth from error. He also seeks to raise awareness among believers that they are living "in the last days". By correcting any wrong thinking, will lead them to change their attitudes and behaviours as followers of Christ.

ii. What does it mean by "the last days"?

It refers to the entire period from Jesus' ascension to His final return, which includes the times that Peter lives. One of the signs of "the last days" is that false teachings and false prophets will be rampant (Matthew 24:3-5,11, 23-26). ἐσχάτων comes from the root of "*eschatology*", which is "the study of *last things*." It includesfuture Bible prophecy, the *end-times* and life after death ("the after-life"). In this verse, it refers to the time immediately preceding Christ's return from heaven and the consummation of the divine kingdom.[[1]](#footnote-1) Signs of the last days means signs that represent the second coming of Christ.

iii. Who do the "mockers" refer to?

They are presumed to be the heretics, opponents of the Christian faith or false teachers described in the previous chapter. ἐμπαῖκτα means derider, i.e. (by implication) a false teacher, mocker or scoffer.[[2]](#footnote-2) In Chapter 2, they are described as those who wilfully "blaspheme the glorious ones" (verse 10), are ignorant (verse 12), deceives others (verse 13), have gone astray from God's truth (verse 15), speak "loud boasts of folly" (verse 18), and entangled with the sins of the world (verse 20). These arrogant slanders will eventually be punished and destroyed (verse 12 and 13).

iv. Why and what do they mock?

Although these opponents are familiar with what the Scriptures say about God's revelation and future judgment, but they become uninterested and questioned about Christ's return (2 Peter 3:4). Many people expected that Christ would come in their day, but they saw that nothing has changed since the time of creation (verse 4). These opponents began to doubt and not take the coming of Christ seriously.[[3]](#footnote-3) They challenged the validity of the claims of Christ and the Gospel, specifically Christ's promise of His return. They deny God's truth and power, and also ridicule Christians for their faith.[[4]](#footnote-4) They have become stubborn, rebellious and deliberately sin by showing disrespect to God and His Word.

v. What does it mean by "following their own lusts"?

The word ἐπιθυμίας means *passion* built *on* strong feelings (urges), or (inordinate) desire, craving or longing. It can also mean to desire for what is forbidden or lust.[[5]](#footnote-5) The ESV translates it as "sinful desires", while the NIV states as "evil desires". In other passages in 2 Peter (1:4; 2:10,18), ἐπιθυμία is used negatively to associate with the world and sensuality.3 By seeking pleasure in self-centered desires of the flesh and of the world, rather than that of God's desires, is an act of disobedience to God's will. God's original intent in creating humans is for them to seek and enjoy His eternal presence and promise, and not ignore Him to seek other ways to temporarily satisfy their cravings. The rest of the epistle mentions that the false teachers indulge in sensual pleasures and encourage others to do so.3 As they deny the reality of any forthcoming judgment or future reward, they determine their freedom to live self-indulgent lifestyles.[[6]](#footnote-6)

vi. By highlighting the reality of this verse, how should Christians respond?

Christians should guard themselves against false doctrines, and resolve to live godly lives while preparing for Christ's return. It is because Jesus Christ will surely return, according to Scriptures, and will bring about the consummation of His kingdom and final judgment. Therefore, everyone will ultimately have to be accountable to God in the way we live our lives, in words and deeds, while on earth.

2. Exegetical Outline

I. An evidence (for Peter's audience) of the period nearing Christ's return was that false teachers will scorn the truth. (verse 3a)

II. Another evidence (for Peter's audience) of the period nearing Christ's return was that false teachers will be lured by their sensuality. (verse 3b)

or

I. (For Peter's audience), the time nearing Christ's return was that false teachers will ridicule the truth. (verse 3a)

II. (For Peter's audience), the time nearing Christ's return was that false teachers will be lured by their sensual pleasures. (verse 3b)

3. CPT/ EI:

(For Peter's audience), the time nearing Christ's return was that false teachers will ridicule the truth and be lured by their sensual pleasures.

Comparisons between different translations of the text:

"Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with *their* mocking, following after their own lusts" (2 Peter 3:3; NASB)

"knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts" (2 Peter 3:3; NKJV)

"Above all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires." (2 Peter 3:3; NIV)

"knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires." (2 Peter 3:3; ESV)

"Most importantly, I want to remind you that in the last days scoffers will come, mocking the truth and following their own desires." (2 Peter 3:3; NLT)

"First of all, know [without any doubt] that mockers will come in the last days with their mocking, following after their own human desires" (2 Peter 3:3; AMP)

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1. "Bible Hub", accessed 20 Feb 2017, http://biblehub.com/greek/2078.htm. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. "Bible Hub", accessed 20 Feb 2017, http://biblehub.com/greek/1703.htm. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Ruth Anne Reese. "*2 Peter and Jude" The Two Horizons New Testament Commentary*. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2007), 164. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Simon J Kistemaker. *NT Commentary: Exposition of the Epistle of Peter and of the Epistle of Jude*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Barker Book House, 1987), 325. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. "Bible Hub", accessed 20 Feb 2017, http://biblehub.com/greek/1939.htm. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Reese, "*2 Peter and Jude" The Two Horizons New Testament Commentary*, 165. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)