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October 9th: 2 Chronicles 20 & 2 Peter 2

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The Lord's deliverance of Jehoshaphat from the Moabites, Ammonites, and Meunites. The character and the fate of false teachers.

Reflections upon the readings from the ACNA Book of Common Prayer (<http://bcp2019.anglicanchurch.net/>).

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Transcript

2 Chronicles 20. After this the Moabites and Ammonites, and with them some of the Muunites, came against Jehoshaphat for battle. Some men came and told Jehoshaphat, A great multitude is coming against you from Edom, from beyond the sea, and behold they are in Hazazan-Tamar, that is, En-Gedai.

Then Jehoshaphat was afraid and set his face to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. And Judah assembled to seek help from the Lord. From all the cities of Judah they came to seek the Lord.

And Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the Lord, before the new court, and said, O Lord God of our fathers, are you not God in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. In your hand are power and might, so that none is able to withstand you. Did you not, O God, drive out the inhabitants of this land

before your people Israel, and give it forever to the descendants of Abraham your friend? And they have lived in it, and have built for you in it a sanctuary for your name, saying, If disaster comes upon us, the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we will stand before this house, and before you, for your name is in this house, and cry out to you in our affliction, and you will hear and save.

And now behold the men of Ammon and Moab, and Mount Seir, whom you would not let Israel invade when they came from the land of Egypt, and whom they avoided, and did not destroy. Behold, they reward us by coming to drive us out of your possession, which you have given us to inherit. O our God, will you not execute judgment on them? For we are powerless against this great horde that is coming against us.

We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you. Meanwhile all Judah stood before the Lord, with their little ones, their wives, and their children. And the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jehaziel, the son of Zechariah, son of Benaiah, son of Jeiel, son of Mataniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, in the midst of the assembly.

And he said, Listen all Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem and King Jehoshaphat, thus says the Lord to you, Do not be afraid, and do not be dismayed at this great horde, for the battle is not yours, but God's. Tomorrow go down against them. Behold, they will come up by the ascent of Ziz.

You will find them at the end of the valley, east of the wilderness of Jeruel. You will not need to fight in this battle. Stand firm, hold your position, and see the salvation of the Lord on your behalf, O Judah and Jerusalem.

Do not be afraid, and do not be dismayed. Tomorrow go out against them, and the Lord will be with you. Then Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell down before the Lord, worshipping the Lord.

And the Levites of the Kohathites and the Korohites stood up to praise the Lord, the God of Israel, with a very loud voice. And they rose early in the morning, and went out into the wilderness of Tekoa. And when they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, Believe in the Lord your God, and you will be established.

Believe his prophets, and you will succeed. And when he had taken counsel with the people, he appointed those who were to sing to the Lord and praise him in holy attire, as they went before the army, and say, Give thanks to the Lord, for his steadfast love endures forever. And when they began to sing and praise, the Lord set an ambush against the men of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah, so that they were routed.

For the men of Ammon and Moab rose against the inhabitants of Mount Seir, devoting

them to destruction. And when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, they all helped to destroy one another. When Judah came to the watchtower of the wilderness, they looked toward the hoard, and behold, there were dead bodies lying on the ground.

None had escaped. When Jehoshaphat and his people came to take their spoil, they found among them in great numbers goods, clothing, and precious things, which they took for themselves until they could carry no more. They were three days in taking the spoil, it was so much.

On the fourth day they assembled in the valley of Berekeh, for there they blessed the Lord. Therefore the name of that place has been called the valley of Berekeh to this day. Then they returned, every man of Judah and Jerusalem, and Jehoshaphat at their head, returning to Jerusalem with joy, for the Lord had made them rejoice over their enemies.

They came to Jerusalem with harps and lyres and trumpets, to the house of the Lord. And the fear of God came on all the kingdoms of the countries when they heard that the Lord had fought against the enemies of Israel. So the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet, for his God gave him rest all around.

Thus Jehoshaphat reigned over Judah. He was thirty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty-five years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Azubah, the daughter of Shilhai.

He walked in the way of Asa his father, and did not turn aside from it, doing what was right in the sight of the Lord. The high places, however, were not taken away. The people had not yet set their hearts upon the God of their fathers.

Now the rest of the Acts of Jehoshaphat, from first to last, are written in the Chronicles of Jehu the son of Hanani, which are recorded in the Book of the Kings of Israel. After this Jehoshaphat king of Judah joined with Ahaziah king of Israel, who acted wickedly. He joined him in building ships to go to Tarshish, and they built the ships in Ezeongiba.

Then Eliezer the son of Dodavahu of Marashah prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying, Because you have joined with Ahaziah, the Lord will destroy what you have made. And the ships were wrecked, and were not able to go to Tarshish. In 2nd Chronicles chapter 20, Jehoshaphat and Judah face a great challenge from the east.

Moab the Ammonites and some of the Muneunites come out against him for battle. The identity of the Muneunites is not entirely clear. It is most likely that they lived to the south of Judah, within the territory of Edom around Mount Seir.

The Moabites and the Ammonites come from the far side of the Dead Sea, and they encamp at Engedi with the Muneunites. Engedi is situated about the middle of the west coast of the Dead Sea. It is quite likely that this conflict is caused by the alliance between Jehoshaphat and the Northern Kingdom.

As the strength of the Kingdom of Moab increased, and they successfully rebelled against Israel, they can now turn against Israel's ally to the south, Judah. Seeing the size of the multitude, Jehoshaphat's response is one of fear. He sets his face to seek the Lord, and proclaims a fast.

And the people seem to spontaneously gather together in a great assembly. They join together from all the different parts of Judah, and have a great assembly before the Temple. In Solomon's prayer of dedication in 1st Chronicles chapter 6 verses 28 to 31, he had declared, If the enemies besieged them in the land at their gates, whatever plague, whatever sickness there is, whatever prayer, whatever plea, is made by any man, or by all your people Israel, each knowing his own affliction, and his own sorrow, and stretching out his hands toward this house, then hear from heaven your dwelling place, and forgive, and render to each whose heart you know, according to all his ways.

For you, you only know the hearts of the children of mankind, that they may fear you, and walk in your ways all the days that they live in the land that you gave to our fathers. As the king, Jehoshaphat is like the chief worshipper, and he leads the people in prayer before the Lord. He declares the greatness of the Lord, that the Lord is above all of the nations, that he is the creator, and he is the God of the covenant, the God of their fathers.

He has the power of rule. He is the one who providentially oversees the affairs of men, and no one can withstand him. He recalls God's work in the exodus, and in the conquest of the land.

God has driven out the former inhabitants, and he promised the land to his people as an enduring inheritance. With the construction of the temple came the promise that the Lord would hear prayers directed to the temple, and now he comes on the basis of what God has done in the past, on the basis of what God has promised, and on the basis of God's power. The threat that Israel seems to face is an existential one.

These forces are not just squabbling over borders, they seem to want to wipe Judah out. And Jehoshaphat underlines this point. These enemies want to drive Judah out of the Lord's possession, which he has given to his people to possess.

When the Lord brought his people out of Egypt, he did not permit them to displace these particular people, the Moabites, the Ammonites and the Edomites. God has established the borders of the peoples, and he gave these peoples their lands. But now these nations want to displace Judah from the inheritance of the Lord.

Jehoshaphat and Judah confess their powerlessness, and they look to the Lord to take action on their behalf. They cannot do anything, but their eyes are upon him. The assembly of the people is not a regular assembly, just of the males of Judah.

Rather, it includes the women and the children. Such a general gathering of the people highlights just how existential the threat they are facing is. The whole fabric of the life of Judah, every part of its people, is now standing in jeopardy.

And the Lord responds with prophecy. The spirit of the Lord comes upon Jehaziel, and he gives a prophecy concerning the deliverance of the Lord. The Lord will save his people, even apart from any action on their part.

They will not need to fight, just stand firm, hold their position and see the salvation of the Lord on their behalf. The language used here is almost exactly the same as that which we find in Exodus chapter 14 verses 13 to 14, preceding the deliverance of Israel at the Red Sea. And Moses said to the people, fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord which he will work for you today.

For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be silent. Jehaziel seems to be one of the Levitical singers.

It is possible that he was not a prophet, and the spirit of the Lord coming upon him was a surprise to all concerned. This gathering of the people in an assembly of worship and a prayer is continued as they go out to the battle. They are led not by elite warriors, but by singers.

This might recall the defeat of places like Jericho, where priests blowing trumpets and carrying the Ark of the Covenant were central to a liturgical procession that led to the collapse of the walls of the city. The singers who lead the army of Jehoshaphat lead the people in a song of praise, and when they begin to sing in praise, the Lord acts on their behalf. An ambush is set against them by the Lord.

This is presumably a human action against them, and as this great army is taken by surprise, they turn upon each other in mutual suspicion, and they end up largely wiping each other out. When Judah sees the aftermath, there are just dead bodies littering the ground. Once again, the careful reader will recall the events of Exodus chapter 14 and the crossing of the Red Sea.

Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore, in verse 30 of that chapter. As the Egyptians were spoiled by the Israelites, so the men of Judah take the spoil of this invading army. There is so much spoil to be had that it takes almost three days to gather it all up.

They respond by blessing the Lord on the fourth day, and renaming the place where they do that after that event, in order to provide a memorial for future generations. They return to Jerusalem with celebrations, with harps, lyres and trumpets, to the house of the Lord. Once again, the triumphal liturgical procession recalls the events of Exodus chapter 14 and 15, in particular the Song of the Sea in chapter 15.

As a consequence of this great victory, the nations around about fear the Lord, knowing that He was the one to bring this great defeat upon the enemies of His people. The result of all of this is that Jehoshaphat enjoys peace on all sides. The chapter ends by recounting his reign.

He was a faithful king like his father Asa, although he did fail to remove the high places. As in 1 Kings chapter 22, we read of his abortive attempts at seafaring. In 1 Kings chapter 22, Ahaziah, the king of Israel, wants to join with Jehoshaphat in the enterprise and send some of his men with the men of Judah on the ships.

Jehoshaphat declines. In 2 Chronicles, however, we read that Ahaziah had been a partner with Jehoshaphat in building the vessels in the first place. It seems most likely that the word of Eliezer the prophet against Jehoshaphat in this alliance came between the building of the ships and their actual sailing, and as a result of the prophecy, Jehoshaphat refused to let Ahaziah's men travel with his men on the ships.

Nonetheless, the ships are wrecked and nothing comes of the enterprise. In 1 Kings chapter 22, the suggestion is given that the ships are constructed according to a model that is associated with Tarshish. Here, however, they seem to be designed to go to Tarshish, which raises challenging questions as Tarshish is usually associated with places on the Mediterranean, whereas these ships are built in the Gulf of Aqaba.

There is very little reason to believe that a circumnavigation of Africa would have been either feasible or even if it were possible for such fledgling sea power that it would be economical. This then leaves us with the question of what must be referred to by Tarshish. It seems unlikely that such an obvious problem would have been unnoticed by the chronicler, so there is most likely some straightforward explanation, even if we do not have it.

A question to consider. As in a number of places in scripture, the great victory of this chapter is a liturgical victory. How do such deliverances help us to think about the worship of the church? 2 Peter chapter 2 And their destruction is not asleep.

For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment, if he did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly, if by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes he condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly, and if he rescued righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked, for as that righteous man lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard, then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment, and especially those who indulge in the lust of defiling passion and despise authority. Bold and willful, 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, suffering wrong as the wage for their wrongdoing.

They count it pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions while they feast with you. 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.

They have followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved gain from wrongdoing, but was rebuked for his own transgression. A speechless donkey spoke with human voice and restrained the prophet's madness. These are waterless springs and mists driven by a storm.

For them the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved. For speaking loud boasts of folly, they entice by sensual passions of the flesh those who are barely escaping from those who live in error. They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption.

For whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved. For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness, than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them.

What the true proverb says has happened to them. The dog returns to its own vomit, and the sow, after washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire. 2nd Peter chapter 2 presents an extended warning about false teachers.

They've arisen in the church, and as Peter is departing, he wants to prepare his hearers to address them. The substance of this chapter is pretty much the same as Jude verses 4 to 16. While there are several differences along the way, much light can be shed upon 2nd Peter chapter 2 by comparing it with the book of Jude.

There is a sort of typological necessity that the great exodus that Jesus brings about follows patterns found in the exodus from Egypt. In that exodus there had been false teachers, and now there will be false teachers again. Part of the challenge of these particular false teachers seems to be a denying of the coming of Christ again.

If the return of Christ is denied, and with that coming judgment, ethics start to unravel.

At the end of the preceding chapter, Peter had presented the hearers with true prophecy, and the confirmation of the substance of true prophecy in the event of the transfiguration. And now he moves on to the question of false teachers.

Against the background of true prophecy, we'll see what is the false. Richard Balkam suggests that the key characteristics of these false teachers, as Peter describes them, is as follows. First, they are not divinely authorised.

Second, they give false assurance of peace. And then third, they will be judged. False teachers are already present, but more will arise.

And this has all been foretold beforehand, so they should not have a sense that God's purposes have been thrown off. In Matthew chapter 24 verses 4 to 13, in the Olivet Discourse, Jesus had declared, And Jesus answered them, See that no one leads you astray, for many will come in my name, saying, I am the Christ, and they will lead many astray. And you will hear of wars and rumours of wars.

See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place. But the end is not yet, for nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are but the beginning of the birth pangs.

Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake. And then many will fall away, and betray one another, and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray.

And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold, but the one who endures to the end will be saved. We find similar sorts of warnings in places like 1 John or in 2 Thessalonians. The word for heresies here might refer to factions.

However, false teaching is clearly involved. They deny the master that bought them. They have participated in Christ's redemption.

They have been brought into the church. They've experienced the truth of God in that context. They've seen something of the way that Christ transforms lives.

These are apostates. The church is not an unmixed group. The church contains both wheat and tares.

This section of the chapter parallels with Jude verses 4 and 5. For certain people have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality, and deny our only master and Lord, Jesus Christ. Now I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that Jesus, who saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe. They practice and advocate a licentious lifestyle.

This is likely chiefly seen in sexual immorality and greed. As a result of their behaviour, God's truth will be blasphemed. When people see their wickedness, they will speak ill of the gospel.

They are motivated by greed and they will exploit the naive. Their motivations are quite impure, but they have persuasive words and they can lead people astray very effectively. But yet their judgment will certainly come.

There is no doubt that God will call them to account. Peter supports his point with a succession of examples. In contrast to Jude, Peter's examples follow the chronological order of biblical history.

He begins with the judgment of the angels of Genesis chapter 6, and then moves to the judgment of Noah's generation, and then finally to Sodom and Gomorrah and Lot. This parallels with Jude verses 6-7. And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day, just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.

Like Jude, Peter here seems to refer to the sin of the sons of God in Genesis chapter 6 verses 1-4 as the sin of angels having sexual relations with human women. This is also seen in 1 Peter chapter 3 verses 19-20. There is extensive reference to this reading of Genesis in the Jewish tradition.

Jude seems to go on to quote the book of 1 Enoch in verses 14-15. It was also about these that Enoch the 7th from Adam prophesied, saying, As the book of 1 Enoch has an extensive account of the sins of the angelic watchers who slept with human women, it would be natural to think that Jude and Peter are working with the same reading. The language of sons of God is used of angels in places such as Job chapter 1 or Deuteronomy chapter 32 verse 8. We see angels taking human form in the book of Genesis, for instance in the visitors to Abraham and Lot in Genesis chapters 18 and 19.

These angels eat, walk, talk and engage in interactions. They appear to have genuine human bodies with ordinary faculties. They are not merely possessing bodies, like demons do.

There is no reason to believe that prior to their judgment the wicked sons of God in Genesis chapter 6 did not have such human bodies. While angels do not have sexual relations as angels, when occupying human bodies there is no reason to believe that they could not have done. The fact that it is sons of God having relations with daughters of men is also important.

There is a sexual asymmetry. Sons with daughters. It is not just an intermarriage of two

groups as such.

Here we should remember that the angels do not have male and female. The angels are seemingly all male. We are also told of the mighty men that are born to the women.

This would also fit with the mythologies of a great many cultures that have myths of such unions. For Jude the false teachers are represented as those who have crept in, as those infecting the church as if from without. In 2 Peter chapter 2 they are from within the church.

Both of these things can be true. It is like the parable of the wheat and the tares. The tares come from without, from the enemy who sows them.

But they are also within the field. Peter contrasts with Jude in his focus on the Lord's preservation of the righteous few, discussing Noah and Lot. Whereas Jude focuses almost entirely upon the punishment of the wicked, Peter brings in this other theme of God's preservation of the righteous.

The flood and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah are paradigmatic judgments in the New Testament. For instance, in Luke chapter 17 verses 26 to 32, These stories are evidence of the Lord's power both to judge the wicked and to preserve the righteous. They are examples of the judgment to come.

Noah is presented as a herald of righteousness and Lot as a righteous man in a wicked city who are saved with a small remnant around them. These figures provide examples for the church as heralds of righteousness like Noah and as those who like Lot are being grieved by the sin that surrounds them. The mention of Lot may be surprising.

He clearly has a very flawed character in Genesis chapter 19. However, Lot is also distinguished from the city around him by the hospitality that he shows, by his strong opposition to the sin of the men of the city, and by his loyalty to the angels. Whatever his failings, he stood out from those people who surrounded him.

The men of Sodom were distinguished by their sensual conduct and by their lawless deeds. Ezekiel chapter 16 verses 49 to 50, Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom. She and her daughters had pride, excessive food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy.

They were haughty and did an abomination before me, so I removed them when I saw it. God is able to keep his people and to mark out the wicked for judgment. Peter especially singles out those who indulge their flesh in unclean lusts and those who despise authority.

The focus on sexual sin and perversity is present as an inciting cause of judgment in both the flood and in the case of Sodom. Like the rest of the New Testament, sexual sin

is treated as a matter of a special seriousness. These people also resist authority, presumably the authority of God in particular, which lies behind all other authorities.

They are rebellious in their fundamental character. Peter then proceeds to unpack their sins in verses 10 to 16. Insubordination and rebelliousness, sexual immorality and greed.

The false teachers are brazen and arrogant in the way that they speak about authorities. The startling thing here is that Peter is probably referring not merely to righteous authorities, but in the first instance to evil angels. Once again, the Jude parallel is instructive.

Jude verses 8 to 10. Yet in like manner, these people also, relying on their dreams, defile the flesh, reject authority and blaspheme the glorious ones. But when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, The Lord rebuke you.

But these people blaspheme all that they do not understand, and they are destroyed by all that they, like unreasoning animals, understand instinctively. Righteous angels, even Michael, who may be Christ himself, do not revile the glorious ones, the exalted yet wicked angels. There seems to be an allusion here back to Zechariah chapter 3. The authority and the power of these wicked angels should be taken seriously.

They are wicked servants of the Lord, and must be dealt with accordingly. We should take a similar attitude towards wicked human authorities. We must speak of them with a proper fear and honour of the authority that they have been given by the Lord.

False teachers are creatures of brute instinct and impulse. They are untamed beasts, and will suffer the same ignoble fate as such creatures. They are like wild animals to be hunted.

These false teachers are also so given to sensuality that they revel in the daytime. This is not just the activity of the night. They give their whole lives to such things.

They are described as blots and blemishes, the things that would defile what should be a spotless sacrifice. They pollute the worship of the people of God. We might here think of 1 Corinthians 5, and Paul's challenge to the Corinthians and their failure to deal with the man who was sleeping with his father's wife.

A little leaven leavens the whole lump. You must purge out the old leaven, that you may faithfully keep the feast. He describes them as adulterous.

Their eyes are scanning rooms for potential partners in their sexual immorality. They never have their fill of sin. They're always hungry for it.

They are filled with greed and desire for material goods. They lead unstable people

astray. They give the impression that people can live for the world and its pleasures, avoid suffering, indulge the flesh, and ultimately face no judgment from God.

Peter compares them to Balaam. In Jude verse 11 we find the same comparison. Woe to them, for they walked in the way of Cain, and abandoned themselves for the sake of gain to Balaam's error, and perished in Korah's rebellion.

Balaam was a mercenary who wanted money and didn't like the Lord's first answer, so inquired again, hoping for a larger reward. He was rebuked by his donkey, who stopped when he was prevented by the angel of the Lord, and spoke the words that God gave to him. The concluding verses of the chapter are similar to those found in Jude verses 12 to 13 and verse 16.

These are hidden reefs at your love feasts, as they feast with you without fear. Shepherds feeding themselves, waterless clouds, swept along by winds, fruitless trees in late autumn, twice dead, uprooted, wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam of their own shame, wandering stars for whom the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved forever. These are grumblers, malcontents, following their own sinful desires.

They are loud-mouthed boasters, showing favoritism to gain advantage. Here then he describes the effects of the false teachers. Like waterless springs, they offer water but give none.

Like the fallen angels, they have been marked out for the gloom of utter darkness. They are especially dangerous to recent converts, people who are just escaping the Sodom and Gomorrah of the world. They are boastful, they present themselves as superior in their insight.

They tempt such people to look and turn back. They assure them that it is possible to retain much of their old sinful ways of life. They promise freedom, but their own lives betray the fact that they are lying.

They are slaves of their own lusts. Once again it seems that the focus is particularly upon sexual immorality. Such false teachers can be known by their fruits, as Jesus declared.

It is not entirely clear whether verses 20-22 refer to the false teachers or to the people who are led astray by them. Ultimately they belong together though, and they share the same destination, so these statements could refer to either of them. Their fate is a tragic warning.

They are like Lot's wife. They seem to escape before looking back. They come to some knowledge of the truth of Christ, but then they turn back and are hardened in their ways.

They end up so much worse off, becoming more fully and willfully entangled in those things that Christ set them free from, and in the process more and more hardened and

inured to the truth. Their apostasy reveals something about their true nature. As they turn back, like a dog to its vomit or a pig to its wallowing in the mire, they reveal something about who they are.

That they are like pigs and dogs, unclean animals, people who despite appearances never actually had the deep transformative work of the Spirit of God. A question to consider. Why do you think that Peter so emphasises sexual immorality in connection with the false teachers in this chapter?